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THE FACTS OF LIFE

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THE FACTS OF LIFE

IN RELATION TO FAITH

BY

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AUTHOR OF 'THE FACT OF CHRIST'

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To my Wife

FEB 15 1960

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PREFATORY NOTE

THIS book is practically a sequel to *The Fact of Christ* (published in 1900), inasmuch as the topics discussed in these chapters—especially the later chapters—and many points raised in their treatment have been suggested mainly through the correspondence which his earlier work brought to the author from varied quarters. He can hardly expect that this volume, dealing as it does with questions chosen just on account of the difficulties they present to many perplexed or inquiring minds, will receive the measure of acceptance so kindly accorded to its predecessor; but if in some degree it helps, it will not altogether fail of its end. The two books are written for persons at somewhat different stages. The writer of the very admirable French translation of *The Fact of Christ*—Dr. Maurice Dusolier—says in his introduction that in that volume is 'a faith gushing out of the heart' (*'une foi jaillie du*

cœur'). The present discussions, it is to be feared, are more laboured in their faith. But they are written at a spot further inland on the 'isthmus' of life, to which reference is made in the opening chapter; and travellers at that stage will make allowance for the difficulty of the road. Perhaps the march becomes lighter again further on.

A few sentences in Chapter VI. are reproduced, with little modification, from a contribution by the present writer to a series of lectures on the Creed, published in 1904 under the title of *Questions of Faith,* but now out of print. The stanzas quoted opposite the beginning of Chapter III. are taken from a small book, privately printed, entitled, *'Verses* by M. T.'; they are by Lady Thomson, and the book is that mentioned in the *Life of Lord Kelvin,* vol. i. p. 533. For several other quotations and references, the writer is indebted to his friend and late assistant the Rev. J. D. M. Rorke, M.A., who further has given him more than one useful suggestion. P. C. S.

1913.

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INTRODUCTORY

THE CREED OF EXPERIENCE

'The gods we stand by are the gods we need and can use, the gods whose demands on us are reinforcements of our demands on ourselves and on one another. Religions have *approved* themselves; they ministered to sundry vital needs which they found reigning. When they violated other needs too strongly, or when other faiths came which served the same needs better, the first religions were supplanted.' WILLIAM JAMES.

2835

EVANGELICAL
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INTRODUCTORY

THE CREED OF EXPERIENCE

A NOTABLE and interesting feature of much of modern thinking on the deeper problems of the mind and soul is that, more and more, the truth about these is sought and tested not abstractly, but in experience. The philosophy of William James exemplified this in what he called pragmatism; and Dr. Rudolf Eucken has developed it more generally in what he calls activism. These are new words, but what they essentially mean is not so new. Just as Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* had talked prose for forty years without knowing he had been literary, so most men who, in any real sense, are living life and who bring their experience and their minds together, are something of pragmatists or vitalists without any consciousness of being philosophical.

Here, indeed, is the third stage in any intelligent man's relation to his faith. The first stage is that of childhood, when we believe what we are told to believe, whether it be God or fairies. When we outgrow this—most of us do—we begin to scrutinise with our reason what we have been told, and to refuse further credence to what can not satisfy us with rational proof. At this point the battle between faith and unbelief is often sharply waged. Yet it is not here that it is finally lost or won. There awaits us another transition—less assertive than that from credulity to criticism, but more profound and conclusive. It is the transition from criticism to experience, from the mere dialectics of reasoning to the actualities of life. Here—for the really living man—is faith's grand climacteric. And our final creed is what we have not merely thought through, but lived through.

This is a change not easy to analyse, because it is gradual, unobtrusive, and indeed, for the most part, subconscious. We may fail not merely to recognise it in others, but even to realise it in ourselves. It goes on, however,

inevitably within every man who (as I have just put it) is bringing his mind and his experience together; and its conclusions are final in a sense in which the opinions of the critical reason—confident as these generally are—can not maintain themselves to be. As men grow older their actual and operative faith or unfaith—which may be something very different from that which, from custom or prudence, they profess—comes more and more to be based on and limited by what in their lives has proved itself to be real and adequate. This modifies what even their logic may think it can prove or disprove. Indeed, one great part of intelligence in life is just to recognise that, in all human, and especially spiritual, affairs, logic must be kept amenable to experience. As a man goes on in life he finds that there is a realm of truth and good at once larger and surer than the one of logical argument—larger, for there is much he comes to know in life which the merely critical reason could never discover or demonstrate, and also surer, because this kind of experience is more a fact of

his life than is the sun. This does not mean any discrediting of reason. But it means that reason, in its full and true sense, is not merely an instrument of logical or historical or critical ratiocination. Reason in its full and true sense is the intelligent relation between man and his whole world. To give it another name, it is not mere reasoning, mere science, but wisdom. And to this wisdom, life contributes more even than logic.

An actual example of what I mean, and one from the mental career of a distinguished man, may be found in the writings of that sincere thinker and eminent biologist, George John Romanes. In early life Romanes published a treatise entitled *A Candid Examination of Theism,* in which he maintained what may be described as materialistic or agnostic conclusions. In a later work, however, he greatly modified and in part retracted these views, and his explanation of this change is interesting. It was not that he had discovered his reasoning to have been at fault; on the contrary, he says, 'as a matter of mere ratiocination, I am not

likely to detect any serious flaws.' But he found that his earlier book was written with what he calls 'undue confidence in syllogistic conclusions'; and he confessed the modification of his views to be 'due not so much to logical processes of the intellect' as to the ripening 'experience of life.'[1] Here is exactly the transition of which I am speaking.

We all make it if we are living life in the world at all. And we must live life in the world. There is no other place for us in which to live it. A man is neither truly a saint nor truly a philosopher—and he may very probably be a prig or a fool to boot—who thinks this world is not the place for him to live, and whose experience of life round about him is not a great and a welcome part of his education in truth. Therefore our life, as we live it, should influence our faith, as it influences everything else. Religious belief should become, if not less and less a thing arguable in logic, certainly more and more a thing tested in experience. And, as a matter of fact, as men grow

[1] Romanes' *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 100.

older they care comparatively little for the *pros* and *cons* of mere apologetic debate. Mr. Lecky has put it thus:—

> 'Young men discuss religious questions simply as questions of truth and falsehood. In later life they more frequently accept their creed as a working hypothesis of life: as a consolation in innumerable calamities: as the one supposition under which life is not a melancholy anticlimax: as the indispensable sanction of moral obligations: as the gratification and reflection of needs, instincts, longings which are placed in the deepest recesses of human nature: as one of the chief pillars on which society rests.'[1]

It is more simply expressed in Tolstoy's masterpiece, where, in a discussion about immortality, Prince Audrey says: 'Yes, that 's Herder's theory, but it 's not that, my dear boy, convinces me; life and death have convinced me.'[2] So it is with all of us who are living life at all. It is 'life and death' that make us believers—or unbelievers.

This is true, of course, of many forms of

[1] Lecky's *Map of Life*, p. 212.

[2] *War and Peace*, Pt. v. chap. xii.

thought or belief. It is true of all aspects of what, in contradistinction from such operations of abstract thought as pure mathematics, may be called *humane* truth. It is particularly true of ethical, spiritual, and religious. In ethics, for example, Aristotle's definition of virtue recognises this amenableness of theory to practical life when it says virtue is to be determined not only 'by reason,' but also 'in the way the man of practical reason would determine it.'[1] Of such a spiritual thing as love we all say with Browning: 'And live be a proof of this.'[2] But nowhere is this appeal to experience more important than in religion, and above all in the Christian religion. Certainly any intelligent Christian faith should be ready to meet the challenge of the reason, and not afraid to meet its criticisms on their own ground. Still, the crucial evidence is found in the experience of the life lived in fellowship with Christ. The man who has this can indeed believe, and as he does he says with St. Paul: 'I know'—not merely I know about—'in whom I have be-

[1] *Nic. Eth.*, ii. 6, 15. [2] *By the Fireside*, xxxix.

lieved.' He is Bernard's *Expertus potest credere.* No doubt, all this may be assumed unwarrantably and even falsely. A shallow man and, still worse, a hypocrite may profess an experience which he does not really know. Men may plagiarise in religion as well as in literature. Still, beyond all question, what is called Christian experience — in repentance, faith, prayer, obedience, and the peace and joy and strength of a new life—is a real *document humain,* and it rightly gives an assurance which nothing merely external can do. The Christian's is essentially a creed of experience.

This has been often said, and need not here be reiterated at length. Yet—and here is the subject of these chapters—is there not another side to this?

Experience is a large word. If you appeal to life for confirmation of your faith, to life you must go. And you must go to it as a whole, not to some selected portion of it. You must go to it open-eyed, wearing no theological or ecclesiastical blinkers which shut off large areas of unwelcome facts, but viewing the world as

it is, and all of it. Nothing short of this is fully and fairly to appeal to experience. But when we do this, does it not give us pause? Does it not chill rather than confirm our faith? Can it be fairly said that the facts of life—not of some secluded section of it within the cloister of the pious soul's experience but of the world, 'which is the world of all of us'—plainly support the assertions, the assurances, the hopes and the ideals of faith? When the receptive and candid mind goes forth to *all* the data of history and life, it is often hard for such faith to maintain its position. Yet this is not a going out to what is false, still less to what is sinful. It is a going out simply to the complete world of experience, outward and inward. There, to many a man, much of what Christian thought and feeling have found and nurtured in their concentration upon the area of religion becomes remote, foreign, out of place. It is like something which we read about in the life, say, of Tibet. It may be true in *its* world, but it seems hardly real in *the* world. At most it is something which, as a

modern play phrases it, 'one meets with nowhere except in Judæa.'[1]

Here is a problem for faith which deserves far more attention than the more open assaults upon belief which come from unbelieving thinkers and writers. Such men rise up periodically, and have done so from the days of Celsus onward. Hardly any of these attacks have long survived—though sometimes they have interestingly revived—but they produce a sensation and, perhaps, a panic for a while. Young men alarm their mothers by airing the latest rationalism, and worthy divines prepare sermons to refute it. After a little it dies away, and the world waits for the next clever man to arise to show it a better faith than that of the apostles. Christianity has had many such 'crises' of faith, and will have many more. But the most real and the permanent problem of faith is not here. It is not created by some clever critic. It arises out of life itself. It is that, as has been already indicated, the facts of life, looked at broadly and candidly, seem

[1] Maeterlinck's *Mary Magdalene,* Act I. sc. iv.

to discredit faith or, at least, do not support its message. The gospel, in a word, does not *echo* in the actual world. This is a genuine problem. It is, in a peculiar degree, the danger which assails faith in what is really its most trying period—that of mid-life. Preachers and others often speak as if youth were the dangerous time of life. This is a mistake. There is a saving idealism about even the errors of youth—except in abnormal cases—which preserves it from the worst dangers. The 'middle watch' is the most trying time. To change the figure, human life is an isthmus between two eternal seas. It is when we are in the valley midway, 'inland far,'—having lost

> 'sight of that immortal sea
> Which brought us hither,'[1]

and not yet having borne in upon our ears the solemn boom of the great ocean whither we go—that faith, and character too, are most surely tested. And one great element in this trial is just, as I have been saying, that all

[1] Wordsworth, *Ode on the Intimation of Immortality,* ix.

around us seems to respond so little to the message of the gospel with which the whole world seemed to be so thrillingly alive as we first stepped out upon the way of life.

Now it will at once be said by at least some readers that all this arises from a poor religious life lived at a low and Sadducean temperature. It is easy to say that. And it has in it the reminder of a grave truth. Nothing is more true than that a man's life reacts on his belief. In particular, a man who is deliberately and habitually so living that he does not want the law and the gospel of Christ to become too plain and authoritative to him, will succeed in making much of faith at least disputable and so dismissable. He may talk much about his 'honest doubts,' but the root of that man's unfaith is his dishonest sins. In all *wilful* sinning there is an element of the morally dishonest. Sin is never the result of really faithful thinking and faithful living. And this affects all our belief. Certainly it is not possible for one who is deliberately living a bad life, and means to go on living it, to be even

intellectually sincere towards the truth that is in Jesus Christ. All this is gravely true, and we cannot be too gravely reminded of it. At the same time, it were, I think, quite an unjust thing to ascribe the problem for faith of which I have been speaking only to sinful or Sadducean character and life. It may arise, and often does arise, from very different reasons, of which I shall mention two. It may arise from not any kind of dishonesty, but, on the contrary, the very desire to know just the truth of things. Or it may arise from not any Sadducean indifference, but, on the contrary, a deepening earnestness about the questions of faith, and the feeling that these grow more difficult as they grow more real. Let us look for a moment at each of these.

I say first, the problem may arise from the desire to know the truth. The one thing a man of character and seriousness wants in religion is just the truth. Here again there is a difference as compared with youth. When youth first comes in contact with the world, what it desires and even needs is less the actual than

the ideal. Our mother, Nature, means that we should be educated first by the generous illusions of life, and a premature wisdom about life's realities is alien to her wise and gentle leading. This applies to many things and, among them, even to faith. When we are young, then, Browning's way of putting Christianity is the right way: 'Has it your vote to be true?'[1] But with the grown man it is different. He will vote only for what experience shows to be solid. He is interested not in a mere ideal but in the actual. The most helpful thing that can be said or done to many a youth of twenty is just to slap him on the back and tell him life is a splendid thing; but you can neither do the one nor merely say the other to a man of forty, whose experience has told him a chequered tale not easily harmonised with the simpler ideals of faith. This sometimes develops in men a hardened and worldly cynicism—a deadly mental and moral sin which has the virtue neither of youth nor of age.

[1] I recall how effectively Professor Henry Drummond used to ask this in his famous addresses to students.

But, on its good side, it develops rather the temper which knows nothing is of real use that is not really true. Goethe says that 'error may be quite right so long as we are young, but we must not carry it on with us into age.'[1] And it is because of what seems the truth of the actual facts of the world and of life that a problem for faith is raised in the mind of so many who have got to the stage of this maxim and whom it were most unjust to denounce as either Sadducean or of dubious morals. This is one reason why people in middle life do not talk of religion as readily as the young or the old do.

But further: faith, I said, becomes more difficult as life grows more real. So long as a man's faith is something still merely on the surface of his life—by which I mean not that it is therefore insincere, but that it has not yet had occasion to be wrought, through trial and discipline, into the deeper parts of his nature—he may believe facilely. But it is not a facile thing to believe when a man is face

[1] *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 72.

to face with the real issues of life and death. Faith then, too, becomes a matter of life or death for the soul. There is a whole world of difference between the question as it presents itself to the budding student of philosophy who sits with his books about him and begins to write an essay on the credibility of something in the Christian faith, and to whom to give up this or that is merely to revise an opinion; and, on the other hand, the question presenting itself to a man who sits with his ruined life about him or his dearest lying cold in the coffin, and to whom the message of Christ is the only alternative to desperation and despair. As the lines of Clough—a man typical of much that has been said in this chapter—truly put it:—

> 'Tis not the calm and peaceful breast
> That sees or reads the problem true,
> They only know on whom 't has prest
> Too hard to hope to solve it too.'[1]

This is what I mean when I say that belief becomes not easier as life becomes more real.

Thus, while admitting a grave element of

[1] *Miscellaneous Poems:* 'In the Depths.'

truth in the connection between unbelief and sinful or Sadducean life, we cannot, I think, accept this as wholly meeting our problem, which I therefore restate. Is faith valid in face of *all* the facts of experience? Granted that a case, even a sincere and strong case, can be made for what is described as the fact of Christ, and for the great intellectual, moral, and spiritual meanings which it contains, yet the thought will occur to the experienced and critical mind that this is specialisation and is exposed to the dangers of specialisation. There are other facts which must be taken into account. And just as the scientific materialist should take more account than he usually does of what Christ is, so the Christian believer must not fail to reckon with the facts in nature and in the world, which are very different from and apparently alien to the religious *data* on which he is apt so largely to dwell. In short, the danger of all specialisation—religious or non-religious—is to mistake the thing we are working at for everything; and the cure for it is to remember that experience is a unity and

truth a seamless garment, and the only way rightly to see life is (in Matthew Arnold's phrase on Sophocles) to see it steadily and see it whole. It is when they thus bring their faith out into life and face to face with all life's facts that many minds feel the shock of a great contradiction. There are many others, no doubt, who do not feel it; perhaps because in some cases they know God too deeply, and in others they do not know life deeply enough. Yet other minds, again, neither saintly nor shallow, seem able, when confronted with things that withstand faith, to slip past them as running water by a stone in its course, or to hop from a realm of faith to a realm of facts as occasion requires. But, as Plato says, philosophy 'thinks things together.' And, in this sense, all people are truly philosophers who are really living life and really applying their life to their religion and their religion to their life—especially the darker and more difficult parts of their experience. Maxim Gorky in one of his books says that 'every one who has a struggle to sustain in life' is a philosopher;

indeed, 'more of a philosopher than Schopenhauer himself, for abstract thought can never be cast into such a correct and vivid plastic form as that in which is expressed the thought born directly out of suffering.'[1] It is those whose thoughts are born in this fashion who, when they bring the great assertions and promises of Christian faith face to face with what life has meant for them, feel the shock. It is not that they adopt or profess positive unbelief; but faith seems to come to a stop. What such persons would say is, I think, something such as this: 'We do not—or at least we would not—deny Christ; but it is impossible to ask us to deny the facts of life. We even desire a religious synthesis of the world, but it must be one not of some selected phenomena in it, but of the world as it actually is and—so far as we may use the expression—the world as a whole. We seek to have life illumined by faith, but it must really be life as we experience it which is so illumined, not some mere section of it seen under artificial

[1] *Varenka Olesowa,* i. 31.

light. We want to learn how to live and die, but not in a way which shuts its eyes to what life and death really are for men.' In words such as these might those of whom I am thinking speak for themselves. Their attitude of mind is surely a most honest one. It is—at least for many—not only an honest but the inevitable attitude. Wordsworth speaks of

> 'this very world which is the world
> Of all of us—the place where, in the end,
> We find our happiness, or not at all.'[1]

What these lines say of happiness may be said, and not less truly, of faith. It is in 'this very world,' with the experience of it we have in our life, that we must find our faith. It is here 'or not at all.'

This then is what we shall discuss in the following chapters—namely, Christian faith, not as considered by itself, but as standing amid and apparently against the facts of life and of the world. It is, of course, an almost limitless subject, for the facts of life and of the world are vast, and experience of them

[1] *French Revolution.*

covers everything. Therefore we can deal with only a few questions which the general problem raises. But this really is no loss. I think many will agree that one thing about life as it goes on is that the questions in it that really matter are found, after all, to be comparatively few. A great many things which used to seem to us to matter tremendously now are seen to be unimportant, or about them one is content to be agnostic, as in many things even the Christian must be; the real questions are now more real, but they are few. If in these pages we can touch only a few questions, I shall try to select those few which are the most real. We need not select them in any too formal plan. The most natural way to begin is, I think, to consider generally what questions are raised in the mind in this connection when we look round the face of the world; thereafter we shall as far as possible let each subject suggest to us the next. This is the way in which we think about the problems of life in the actual business of living, and I hope one may keep in touch with the living of life even in the writing of a book.

I

THE INDIFFERENT WORLD

'The keener insight of the New Age and a more accurate acquaintance with the laws which govern alike our human life and Nature, make it quite clear that neither in the way of love nor in that of justice does Reality endorse our ethical demands. Nature's indifference to man's welfare is appalling, yet unmistakable; and it is becoming increasingly plain that every attempt to shape our human world into a kingdom of justice and love proves lamentably inadequate and meets with restrictions at every turn.'

RUDOLF EUCKEN.

EVANGELICAL
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CHAPTER I

THE INDIFFERENT WORLD

THE first and most general problem which arises out of the facts of experience to confront and seemingly contradict faith is just that this world on the face of it, is such a strange and difficult place in which to believe the gospel. Nature and life seem to tell a very different tale about their Author than that which we are told in church about our Father in heaven.

There is, of course, a prior question as to whether they tell of any Author at all. But life is short and books should not be long; so I must be allowed here to postulate the existence of God. The idea that evolution has made this postulate no longer tenable or necessary is now seen to be an entire fallacy. Not many decades ago orthodox religion was in

something of a panic about this. Bishops could hardly go to bed for fear of the apparition (as somebody's humorous pen put it) of 'an extraordinarily intelligent ape or an unusually hairy man,' and divines could not pass a chemist's shop without the apprehensive thought of some atheistically potent atom which might dispense with the Creator. Such alarms do not now perturb the slumbers even of a curate nor the perambulations of the humblest local preacher. We all see now that 'God is not less God, nor the creative energy less creative, because we are led to suppose that a lengthy instead of a sudden method was employed in the production of the Cosmos.'[1] Evolution, that is to say—and it is a commonplace to say it—is a process, not a cause; it is a 'history,'[2] which needs an Author as much as does the story described in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. For that this *cosmos* of reason and beauty has been evolved through the chances of an infinite series of molecular vari-

[1] J. A. Symonds's *Essays, Speculative and Suggestive*, p. 10.
[2] Huxley's own word for it.

ations is exactly as credible as that if a box of printer's type were shaken about in the dark for a very long time there might result a *Hamlet* or a *Paradise Lost.* The difficulty for faith about the facts of this world is not of this kind—not, at any rate, with straight and sensible minds.

It is a moral rather than a merely logical problem, and may be stated thus. Here is religion, professing to come to us in God's name and telling us what are the things of transcendent importance in faith and life. And here is the world—God's world, surely—which seems utterly indifferent to these things. Nature takes simply no notice of the spiritual and ethical interests which, according to religion, are the supreme things in God and for man. It does not seem to exist in any connection with them. Yet this is the world in which man lives, and this nature he to at least some degree shares. There is an interesting problem here, and one which, in some respects, is a very difficult one. This chapter will merely touch on its more general aspects; its features of special

difficulty must be treated more fully in subsequent chapters.

It is well to begin from the beginning, so I shall first state this topic as it arises out of the mere existence of things in the natural world. This is expressed in lively fashion in the following passage from one of Walter Bagehot's stimulating essays:—

> 'Every one who has religious ideas must have been puzzled by what we may call the irrelevance of creation to his religion. We find ourselves lodged in a vast theatre, in which a ceaseless action, a perpetual shifting of scenes, an unresting life, is going forward; and that life seems physical, immoral, having no relation to what our souls tell us to be great and good, to what religion says is the design of all things. Especially when we see any new objects or scenes or countries we feel this. Look at a great tropical plant, with large leaves stretching everywhere, and great stalks branching out on all sides; with a big beetle on a leaf and a humming-bird on a branch, and an ugly lizard just below. What has such an object to do with *us,* with anything we can conceive or hope or imagine? What *could* it be created for, if creation has a moral end and object? Or go into a gravel-pit or stone-quarry; you see there a vast accumulation of dull

> matter, yellow or grey, and you ask, involuntarily and of necessity, why is all this waste, and irrelevant production, as it would seem, of material? Can anything seem more stupid than a big stone *as* a big stone, than gravel for gravel's sake? What is the use of such cumbrous, inexpressive objects in a world where there are minds to be filled, imaginations to be aroused, and souls to be saved?'[1]

I have quoted this at length because it would be a pity to break in on Bagehot's vivacious sentences; but the problem it presents is one we need not feel too gravely. After all, where is this 'irrelevant world' of 'inexpressive objects' which has nothing to do 'with *us*' or 'with anything we can conceive or hope or imagine'? It exists only in the mind of the doctrinaire. The real world has everything to do with us and with what we can conceive and hope and imagine. What but this is the meaning of science and of art? Surely things are shot through with reason, and often with beauty too. 'How exquisitely,' as Wordsworth says,

> 'the external world is fitted to the mind.'[2]

[1] *Literary Studies,* iii. (essay on 'The Ignorance of Man').
[2] *The Excursion:* preface.

In short, there is no such thing as 'dull matter.' There may be dull men. There is something 'more stupid than a big stone *as* a big stone,' and that is the mind of Peter Bell, to whom a big stone exists only *as* a big stone and 'nothing more.' Tennyson's lines, addressed to not anything so important as 'a great tropical plant' but merely to a 'little flower,' are nearer to the truth of things:—

> 'Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies,
> I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower—but *if* I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is.'

There is more philosophy here than in asking 'What has such an object to do with *us*?' I do not think that I need to dwell on this. I trust that, despite tropical plants, however great their stalks, despite humming-birds and even beetles, despite pits and quarries, yea, despite gravel itself, we may yet hold fast the faith.

The problem, however, is more real, and must be treated more seriously when we look at the operations of the natural world. It is

indeed not easy to perceive there any law or order which proceeds from the God of whose character Christian faith tells us in Christ. This is a rational world, but it is not plainly a moral world—still less a world illustrating the high ethical and spiritual laws of the gospel. The processes of nature seem to have nothing to do with considerations of morality, while its whole dominating principle of evolution through a struggle for existence is apparently the very negation of the great spiritual principle of self-sacrifice. It is well known how emphatically Huxley asserted this in a notable Romanes lecture. 'It is impossible,' he said, 'to look the world in the face, and bring the course of nature into harmony with even the elementary requirements of the ethical ideal of the just and the good.' Indeed, 'the cosmic process,' he goes on to declare, 'has no kind of relation to moral ends.'[1] There is a problem here which must be patent to every observant mind.

[1] *Evolution and Ethics* (in *Collected Essays* by T. H. Huxley, ix. ii.).

It is generally admitted that Huxley's statement of it is too one-sided. There is even in the struggle for existence another side, in which are developed the altruistic qualities of 'the love of mates, parental sacrifice, filial affection, the kindliness of kindred, gregariousness, sociality, co-operation, mutual aid, and altruism generally.'[1] The business of evolution is love as well as hunger, and calls out self-sacrifice as well as self-preservation. The exaggeration of such a statement as that 'the cosmic process has no kind of relation to moral ends' is further apparent from the very fact that we are considering this problem at all. For who or what is it that thus condemns the morality of nature? It is man, who is himself a product of nature and the crown of its evolution. Surely we cannot call that process altogether immoral which culminates in a protest in the name of morality. How does a non-moral system evolve a moral product? How—to put it more personally—did a non-ethical cosmic process develop so ethically sensitive a Romanes lecturer?

[1] *Darwinism and Human Life,* by J. Arthur Thomson, p. 88.

So this sweeping arraignment of nature must be taken with some qualification. It is really an arraignment of nature with part left out, and that part, in the end, its full and final development in man. But if nature is to be judged it must be judged as a whole, and further, its lower stages interpreted in terms of the later and higher. The whole of nature includes morality in germ from an early stage, and certainly, in its later stage, includes human morality as really as the law of gravitation or the positively immoral struggle for existence. Viewing thus nature as a whole, we find not simply that it is non-moral, and certainly not that it has 'no kind of relation to moral ends,' which is palpably not the fact, but that it is in part non-moral and in part moral. This, of course, Huxley admits—though he calls only the non-moral part 'nature' and, for no apparent reason, calls morality 'an artificial world' which man has built up within the other —and it is the opposition between them which is his problem, in which he finds 'the roots of pessimism.' Now certainly if the non-moral part of nature which we see so largely in the

physical world and the moral part of it which we see in man are merely set against one another, and the one part held to have no relation to the other, a dualism is declared which it is hard for faith to meet—not merely Christian faith, but faith of any kind in a rational and moral *cosmos;* moreover, since man's resistance to the physical powers of the universe is futile, it would seem the only creed is an unhoping stoicism. But are we driven to this dualism and this pessimism? Is it not possible to discern a deeper unity which reconciles the difference and relieves the despair?

Let us try to answer this question not so much by abstract philosophy about the world—really one can philosophise in an abstract way about the world to *any* conclusion—as by that appeal to experience of which so much was said in the opening chapter. Each of us finds the problem in miniature in the area of his own life. We are all denizens of this dual world—a world, on the one hand, of moral principles and ideals, and, on the other, of conditions and forces about us which are in-

different and hostile to these spiritual elements. Is this, in actual experience, merely a dualism, the one part of which has no relation to the other but that of indifference or alienation? I think we have only to look at the making of human character to see an answer to that question. The moral character of man is the unity which is deeper than this difference, and to it both aspects of this dual world contribute. For such character is the fruit *not* simply of spiritual instincts and ideals, or of these operating in an ethical vacuum; it is the fruit of these rising up out of and maintaining themselves against the neutrality and even the antagonism of a non-moral world. Whatever morality may mean for other beings and in other spheres, of which we know nothing, certainly 'for beings such as we are and in such a world as this' (to use Butler's phraseology) the moral life means a moral choice and a moral conflict. And a moral choice means a morally neutral world in which to choose, and a moral conflict means even a hostile element in the world against which the moral ideal is

to be asserted. So the ethical indifference of the natural world and even its unethical processes simply mean that nature will not bribe or coerce man's moral choice, and further, will test it. Consider how moral character would be practically meaningless if it were otherwise. If nature were insistently and immediately moral, we should not be. Let us imagine a world whose natural laws and processes were made palpably and invariably subject to moral canons, and observe the result. If the rain fell on the land only of the virtuous farmer, if calamity should depend on character, if gravitation should involve the sinner but exempt the saint from injury, then virtue would be prudential rather than moral, and goodness the saving less of the soul than of the skin. Morality, I repeat, is morality for man, only if it be a choice and a conflict; and the function of the non-moral and, in places, anti-moral processes of nature is just that, in face of these, the moral consciousness may choose and may contend even against odds, and so be worthy of the name of moral.

Thus if we view nature as a whole, including therein the moral life of man, and interpret its lower stages in the light of its higher, we find we must revise our characterisation of it as having no relation to moral ends. And to interpret the lower in connection with the higher is surely the only right way. Life—the life of nature as a whole or of any organism in nature—is a unity. Its meaning is to be found in a synthesis, not merely in the analysis of sections taken separately. And the synthesis is not found in the incomplete but in the more complete—in the flower, not in the seed. Therefore it is no fond anthropocentric egotism but a true principle for either science or philosophy to find the key to all the problems of nature—and certainly its deeper and more spiritual enigmas, such as this now before us—in the moral self-consciousness of man which is the crown of nature. When we do this we find 'nature' even in its limited physical sense to be part of the stuff from which man's moral life is made. The cosmic process is not ethical, but it is used for ethical

ends. It is not the theatre only but also the needful, though unconscious, minister of the making of the moral life.

All this is not merely of speculative interest; it is also of practical concern. If our doctrine of the world be that nature is hopelessly and finally non-ethical, and that it has 'no kind of relation' to man's moral life, then it is impossible not to be chilled in all our moral outlook and endeavour. We must feel that man has been placed in the wrong world for his spiritual ideals. Even when this does not lead us to give up the moral ideal altogether—as, perhaps, logically it should—certainly it discourages anything like a vigorous and victorious moral faith. We fall into the view of life in relation to nature pictured in Matthew Arnold's *Empedocles in Etna,* where man's aims and efforts are met at every turn by an indifferent and ever opposing world which goes straight on with *its* life regardless of his, and the conclusion is that we must not seek too much, though, since some 'moderate bliss' is attainable, we need not wholly despair. It is

of happiness the poet is speaking, but the conclusion is still more easily reached as regards the spiritual ambition and endeavour. But this is not the wrong world for man's highest life. Just because it is a difficult world for his spiritual ideals, it is the very world for moral choice and moral conflict and moral character. Poets more virile than Arnold—who seemed to be able to get good from nature only in certain kinds of weather—know this; Browning and still more George Meredith know it is through this antagonism that 'flesh unto spirit must grow.' And so I say again man is not in the wrong world for his spiritual ideals. He is in a world demanding moral choice and moral conflict, and that is the very world for moral character. 'Rephan'—the sphere void of effort and antagonism—is a poorer home for us than earth with all its struggles.[1] To sum it up in a word, the moral life for us must be *what-ought-to-be* differentiated from and maintained against the *what-is;* and thus nature—the great *what-is*—has its place, and its necessary place,

[1] *Vide* Browning's poem with this title in *Asolando.*

in the ethical scheme of the life which is moral just because it is something more than natural. Let us then not see in the contradiction between the moral ideal within and the non-moral actual without merely (as Huxley does in the lecture already mentioned) 'the roots of pessimism;' let us find rather the conditions of morality itself.

Hitherto I have been speaking only of the physical world of nature. But there is also round about us a spiritual world, by which I do not in the least mean here anything which theology may mean by that (or the Psychical Society may mean), but only that we live amid a system of forces operating upon life and character and destiny other than merely the play of winds and waves. There are powers round about human life environing man with circumstance, meeting him with hap, following up his acts with consequences, in the end sealing his character and fate. What are we to think of *this* world in which our lives work out their lot? Is it, too, not a non-moral system in which it is impossible to read anything but

chance and fate—a chance and fate far removed indeed from the moral providence and fatherhood of the God revealed in Jesus Christ? This subject we shall discuss in the subsequent chapters of the book; and—for reasons I shall give presently before closing this chapter—I propose to discuss it not generally but rather by taking up specific aspects of life where the problem is most distinct and acute. Meanwhile I shall make one general remark, and illustrate it with a brief reference to the witness of the greatest name in literature.

The general remark is that, just as we have seen that nature must not in every phenomenon remind us of moral laws and insist upon our obedience of them, so life must not do so in every incident. Therefore it is not any valid argument against the moral order of life if we find when we look at isolated incidents (as most works of fiction do) that there is little moral purpose to be seen, but only hap and fate. It is, however, different when we look at long stretches of life and at experience as a whole. This difference is apparent even

in literature. Nothing is more noticeable in modern literature than that it is the greatest writers, and those who treat life at length and on the grand scale, who most of all at least leave room in their presentation for deeper thoughts than that of our existence as meaningless and vain. As an example of this I name Tolstoy, not in his hortatory tracts—which, to me at least, are unconvincing and tiresome—but in such complete and superb canvases as *Anna Karénina* or *War and Peace*. But let us, without discussing modern writers, turn to the only greatest.

The unique and incomparable authority of Shakespere for our present purpose arises not merely from his supreme pre-eminence on any matter of human life and character (except, it must be said, the life and character which are distinctively Christian), but also and particularly because he is so absolutely free from any preconceived moral or theological theory of life. He is the perfect secularist, simply seeing what men do and are, and setting down the facts of life. It is not for nothing that we

cannot tell what Shakespere's religion was, or if he had any;[1] if we could, 'the less Shakespere he.' As has been said of him by the most critically just and the most morally discerning of his modern interpreters:—

> 'He looked at this "secular" world most intently and seriously; and he painted it, we cannot but conclude, with entire fidelity, without the wish to enforce an opinion of his own, and, in essential, without regard to any one's hopes, fears, or beliefs. His greatness is largely due to this fidelity in a mind of extraordinary power; and if, as a private person, he had a religious faith, his tragic view can hardly have been in contradiction with this faith, but must have been included in it, and supplemented, not abolished, by additional ideas.'[2]

What then is Shakespere's 'tragic view'—his view, that is to say, of human hap and fate in especially the darker aspects of life? No more carefully weighed and yet also more profoundly sympathetic answer to this question has been given than in the book from which

[1] Nothing can be more futile than the attempt to build up a theory of Shakespere's personal faith from sayings of the characters of his plays.

[2] A. C. Bradley's *Shakesperian Tragedy*, p. 25.

I have just quoted. I shall do better to quote from it further than attempt any statement of my own. Mr. Bradley finds Shakespere's tragic world to be, on the one hand, 'something piteous, fearful, and mysterious;' yet, on the other, 'it does not leave us crushed, rebellious, or desperate.' From this it seems that the ultimate power revealed therein is not a moral power in the sense of one always just or benevolent; yet neither is it 'a face, whether malicious or cruel, or blind or indifferent to human happiness or goodness,' and it is certainly not a fate in the sense of 'a blank necessity, totally regardless alike of human weal and of the difference between right and wrong.' It shows other characteristics 'which would lead us to describe it as a moral order and its necessity as a moral necessity.' It shows itself 'akin to good and alien from evil.' It traces suffering and death to sin. It makes evil to work out everywhere 'as something negative, barren, weakening, destructive, a principle of death.' And when there comes tragic calamity, 'the suffering and death arise from collision,

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not with a fate or blank power, but with a moral power.' With all this there is—what Shakespere again and again impresses on us, but not more often or more deeply than life itself does—an appalling 'waste' of good. Of this, which is the very essence of the tragic view of life, no solution is offered, unless by the suggestion, undefined but irresistible, at the close of the greatest tragedies—*Hamlet* and *King Lear*—that this tragic world is no final or complete reality, and that even its victims vanish (as Mr. Bradley finely puts it) 'not into nothingness but into freedom.'[1]

Such then, in the fewest words, is the 'tragic' world of human life as seen by the sanest, surest, and most searching eyes ever bent upon its multiplex mystery. Some readers of the foregoing paragraph may wonder that I have made so much of this. But any one who has not merely read Shakespere's plays or analysed his *dramatis personæ,* but tried, in some degree, to grasp as a whole the hardly less

[1] *Shakesperian Tragedy,* pp. 25, 26, 30, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38. Also, on the last point, pp. 322-7, which are pages worthy of their topic.

than infallibly just vision of life in the dramatist's mind which is so remarkably detached from all its dramatic work yet surely also so deeply in it all, will understand that it is by no means an unimportant or irrelevant thing to consider what Shakespere found in the world of life to be—the world in which we are asked to believe the gospel. Certainly he did not find it a world which declared the gospel; the world is not meant to do that. But he did not find it a world so morally dead and meaningless as practically to make a gospel impossible. This, I repeat, is not an irrelevant thing for faith to know. It permits us at least to listen whether there be not a gospel.

This so-called 'indifferent world' then belies its title. It is not so indifferent as it seems. Its physical phenomena are shot through with reason; its moral neutrality is the school of human character; its life-order adumbrates a moral order even in its tragedy.

I do not propose to discuss further the *general* question of the relation to faith of the world we live in; not that what has been said

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is a complete argument, but because I believe that the real difficulties which most people feel on this subject are not about life and nature in general but arise out of certain things in the world. To these particular things, then, I shall now turn. They are old problems, and perhaps there is little or nothing new to say upon them. But they present themselves afresh to every thinking mind and call always for reconsideration. It is true that the way of modern thinkers is to pass over these definite questions and to give us disquisitions at large about life and a principle of the universe. I know that exponents of such modern thinkers as Dr. Eucken and M. Bergson regard the discussion of 'the time-worn problems of destiny, freedom, and the mystery of pain and evil' as an out-of-date survival of that 'intellectualism' from which the conceptions of activism and creative evolution have liberated the mind.[1] Well, we have all been stimulated by these attractive and invigorating writers, and particularly with the brilliant suggestiveness of the

[1] *Eucken and Bergson,* by E. Hermann, p. 142.

idea of *l'évolution créatrice* (the value of which as a reaction against a mechanical and materialistic evolutionary doctrine is very highly to be estimated even by those who find some difficulty in M. Bergson's writings in knowing where seductive metaphor ends and solid *data* begin); but, for my humble part, I find, after reading these general philosophical systems, that the difficulties which seem to contradict my faith in the gospel—the real and nameable and concrete difficulties of life—are exactly where they were. Indeed, I often feel that the systematic philosopher knows little of doubt in the real and deadly sense. The truth is—though in saying this I mean no kind of disrespect to the works of philosophical system—*it is so easy to generalise.* And there is nothing about which to generalise is so easy as just the universe. It is easier to philosophise about the universe than to face this or that difficult thing in it, jut as it is easier to make sapient observations about human nature than justly to judge the character of this or that man or woman. Therefore in these pages I am going

to turn again to these definite 'time-worn problems,' because I am sure it is in these, and not in the world at large, that most men find their faith most really challenged. I give notice of this in order that the reader who prefers to discuss the general philosophy of the universe may at this point—if indeed he has not done it already—throw this book away.

II

THE PROBLEM OF PAIN

'If God I sought where He has wrought
Works lovely and sublime,
With eyes of doubt, Pain pointed out
Earth's misery and crime.

From summer skies and sunset dyes
He takes the glory quite,
Nor lets me see (so cruel he)
The splendours of the night.

Now where is rest, when such a guest
Me ever followeth,
Nor lets me clasp with desperate grasp
The outstretched hand of Death?'

M. T.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF PAIN

The two features of the world which at once and palpably seem in conflict with faith in God are suffering, which is in apparent contradiction to Divine Love, and sin, which is out of harmony with Divine Righteousness. These are indubitably connected; yet each presents its own problem. That of suffering lies, I believe, more deeply on many minds than they ever tell; it is not the whimperers who feel it most, but patient and quiet souls. It oppressed the grave and reverent mind of Darwin, and seemed to him 'a strong argument against the existence of an intelligent First Cause.'[1] With Darwin the problem was largely that of the meaning of suffering in the animal world; but into that question I do not propose to enter here, not that I do not feel there is a mystery

[1] *Life and Letters*, ii. 311.

there (which, if by some exaggerated beyond the facts, is by others too easily dismissed), but because it hardly comes within the comment of personal experience which is our topic in these pages. The problem of human suffering calls for our consideration as a part of that experience, and it may be enough to deal here only with it.

Surely it is unnecessary to awaken the mind to realise how real the problem is, and I shall not here indulge in any pictorial description of the spectacle of suffering. A comfortable optimism may minimise it, pointing out—what doubtless is true—that there are in the world a far greater number of persons happy than there are afflicted; while another type of temperament will find all life lying in the dark shadow of suffering, and build up a philosophy of pessimism. It is enough for our present purpose to say, without accepting either extreme, that indubitably there is in the world an amount of sorrow and pain and wrong sufficient to challenge any facile faith. We hardly dare, indeed, to think how great and how

poignant it is. Our imaginations simply skate over the surface ice of human woe. To plumb its nether deeps would break the heart. To pursue the investigation in some cases only a little way is to feel faith becoming chilled to the marrow. Instinctively we shut our eyes to much of this side of life; but when we really look at it, the problem of faith is indisputable.

It is a problem to discuss which abstractly is of little use. Pain is essentially a personal thing—a thing in the personal experience of individuals. It is not, therefore, the place of pain in the scheme of the universe we must consider, but the place of pain in men's and women's lives. To this, then, I turn at once. I think we shall find things here which, if they do not solve the problem—for that, as I shall say before the chapter closes, something more must be added—at least illuminate it.

In the first place, we find that suffering in human lives is, in the most real sense, part of these lives. What I mean is this. When a child first encounters the fact of pain he resents it as external, intrusive, unnecessary, alien. He

does not accept it as any necessary part of life. It is something simply to be avoided. But, gradually as we grow older, we come to see that the element of suffering is more than this. It is not something obstructive among the factors of human life, but is itself one of the very greatest of these factors—an integral element of both physical and moral existence. In physical evolution a painful struggle is the very law of existence; and, in higher forms of life, pain —as I shall say more particularly immediately —plays an even more important part. To object to pain, therefore, is not to object to some alien thing which has got into life, as a needle gets into the finger; it is to object to the very fibre and tissue of life itself. This may not seem very important; but it is important, for it suggests that our true attitude to this element in life is not to try to deny it or eliminate it (as the Christian Scientist would do), but to understand what is its function.

A second thing about pain which experience teaches us to observe makes this clearer. We cannot but discover from life that pain in-

creases as life becomes higher. This is not what we should expect, and it is certainly not what we should have chosen; but it is so. Nature evolves physically, and highly organised creatures feel more pain than do the lower. It evolves to consciousness and to reason, and man has sufferings to which the brute is a stranger.[1] It evolves spiritually, and the artist and still more the saint can know agonies of soul which the low-minded and worldly man is spared. And one must with reverence add that He whom we call the Perfect Man was *the* Man of Sorrows, and His crown was a crown of thorns. I do not forget in saying this that, as human life becomes higher, its joy also increases. Still, it is not otherwise than through suffering that these higher joys are reached. And they involve, too, keener pains; if the purest joy of purest souls is love, nothing suffers as love can suffer. This, then, is a second thing which experience shows us about this difficult element in life—it is not

[1] This is one of the facts often forgotten in statements of the problem of suffering in the animal world.

merely an integral part of life but a part which, far from being discarded, is, on the contrary, developed as life attains to higher things.

These two things, however true, do not help us much in the problem for faith till they are linked to a third thing about the fact of suffering which experience teaches us even more clearly. Here I must be allowed to start from the premiss—which surely it is not necessary to argue in these pages—that man's true life and destiny are in character. Whenever we accept this—which, one may remark, at once puts out of court all the criticism of pain which is simply the chagrin of a thwarted hedonism —experience at once comes forward to tell us that no one other thing in life carves and chastens the moral character in man as suffering does. This must not be said in any spirit of forced and false asceticism. The idea that pain is a good is a dogma of mediævalism or heathenism, and is neither supported by a sane philosophy nor corroborated by experience. What experience tells us is not any theory of pain as good, but the fact of life that char-

acter reaches its crown and completion only through the tests of this discipline. No earnest and candid mind can look carefully at life without perceiving this, and without recognising that there is nothing which deepens the mind, cleanses the heart, and chastens the whole spiritual being of man as suffering does—either his own suffering or that of others which he makes his own by sympathy. Indeed, does not human character seem to *need* this element in experience if it is to attain its highest?[1] Is it not true that a life—other than a child's—which knew only happiness and sunshine would almost inevitably become an ignoble life? *Niemand wird ohne Leiden geadelt*—without sorrows no one becomes noble. This is true not only of the more distinctively moral or religious side of character, but also of art and of love. I do not say that suffering always makes the mind or heart or character noble. There are many facts in life which disprove

[1] I recall the late Pastor von Bodelschwink—the founder of the great *Colonie Bethel* (for epileptics and other sufferers) at Bielefeld, Germany, once saying to me in the face of that spectacle of affliction: 'But there is not more than we need.'

that. In generalising about life one must never let oneself forget that humanity is not an abstract generalisation, but is composed of individuals, and that individuals differ. In many cases suffering deadens rather than illumines the mind, and embitters rather than purifies the heart, and even demeans rather than ennobles the character. Still, this does not alter the broad fact of the great work which this dark element in experience does, as is witnessed to alike by some of the greatest things in literature and some of the deepest things in life.

Into the witness of literature on this subject I cannot possibly enter, and shall say of it here only one thing, that it is not by any means confined to Christian or even specifically religious writers, but, on the contrary, finds its most notable illustrations in classics written purely from the human and secular standpoint. Look —for but a moment—at the great Greek dramatists. The problem of suffering is continually before Æschylus and Sophocles and Euripides. They offer no solution of it, but all of them find it—in at least some aspects—both mean-

ingful and moral. For Æschylus it is primarily retributive, but, in addition, it is educative too, and he preaches 'the sure ordinance that by suffering shalt thou learn.'[1] Sophocles —'who saw life steadily and saw it whole'— is too reasonable to maintain the retribution theory at the expense of facts, and dwells rather on the way in which the mind is enlightened and the character chastened through discipline and pain; thus, in what is the most appalling case of unmerited suffering in literature, Œdipus is purged of his earlier faults, and is made (in the later play bearing his name) a new man because of all the unspeakable agony he has had to bear. But Sophocles sees more than this. He sees how human suffering is working out wide and great purposes, beyond the sufferer, in history and for humanity; thus the martyrdom of Philoctetes is ordained for great ends in Troy, and the sacrifice of Antigone, whose dying word is that she suffers because she 'feared to cast away the fear of Heaven,'[2] is for the exhibition and vindi-

[1] *Agamemnon*, 188 *sqq.* [2] *Antigone*, 942.

cating of the law of the higher life. And even Euripides—'most tragic of poets,' in whose dramas the contending forces of existence are least reconciled—feels the same truth, and in his most tragic pages; even Hecuba, who, amid the dire fate of the Trojan women, can see at first 'nothing, nothing but the rod of mine affliction,' discerns presently how God has 'turned us in His hand' and 'all is well' and 'our wrong an everlasting splendour.'[2] Thus —though I have insulted so fine a theme by so momentary a glance—do these supreme writers of the old pre-Christian time all find the morality and the meaning that are somewhere in the fact of suffering.

And what literature thus so greatly teaches, how deeply and surely does life confirm, showing us one by one that the discipline of sorrow and suffering is just the very thing our moral and spiritual character simply could not have done without. This is not a mere pietism; it is a fact of experience if anything is. The present writer—if he may be pardoned the

[2] *Troades*, 1240 *sqq.*

personal reference—has had it said to him not once or twice but many times, in almost these very words, by persons of widely different characters; and his experience in this is only what any one could give who has had any occasion to come into more intimate contact with human lives. And again and again we may observe it for ourselves. We see how some loss or pain is not a mere negation in our own or other's lives, but is really

> 'a part,
> And that a needful part, in making up
> The calm existence which is mine when I
> Am worthy of myself.'[1]

Or we say of it more simply—and the more simply this kind of thing is said the better[2]—with the old psalmist: 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' As life goes on, a great many people come to see this in at least their own lives. To see it in the lives of others is

[1] Wordsworth's *Prelude*, bk. i.

[2] When it is said at length and self-consciously (as in Mr. A. C. Benson's *Rod and Staff*) it produces a dubious effect on the reader.

often not so clear; but we may be not meant to hold the key of any life but our own.

Now, if this be true, what does it mean? It means this at least, that the element of pain and loss in human life is not a meaningless thing, and that, indeed, it is essentially a moral thing. This is really a great position, if we can attain it. The bitterest thing in pain and loss is that it is all mere chance—mere unmeaning accident. It is this, for example, which adds the last bitter drop to the confirmed pessimism of one of the most powerful of living English novelists. Mr. Hardy is constantly making us feel how by some little trifle—the merest chance or accident—happiness is baffled and the souls and lives of men and women doomed. In some of his outspoken poems he expresses this as a definite view of pain in the world, as in the following lines, entitled 'Hap':

'If but some vengeful god would call to me
From out the sky, and laugh: "Thou suffering thing,
Know that thy sorrow is my ecstasy,
That thy love's loss is my hate's profiting!"

Then would I bear, and clench myself, and die,
Steeled by the sense of ire unmerited;
Half eased in that a Powerfuller than I
Had willed and meted me the tears I shed.
But not so. How arrives it joy lies slain,
And why unblooms the best hope ever sown?
—Crass Casualty obstructs the sun and rain,
And dicing Time for gladness casts a moan.
These purblind Doomsters had as readily strown
Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain.'[1]

Mr. Hardy is an author whose darkest pages are to be read with a certain respect, for his is not a cheap cynicism but a sincere, if a mordant, unfaith. But I do not think a sonnet such as the above is the true account of the element of suffering in life, when life is looked over in some long stretch—and life cannot be truly seen except in long stretches—or the true echo of what most men feel about their greatest sorrows. The smaller pains and losses of life suggest this thought of mere bad hap. But life's great sorrows and afflictions suggest otherwise. As has been finely said, *'les douleurs passagères blasphèment et accusent le ciel;*

[1] *Wessex Poems*, p. 7.

les grandes douleurs n'accusent ni ne blasphèment; elles écoutent.'[1]

This, then, I think is the great comment of experience on the problem of pain—that suffering is a meaningful thing, accomplishing moral ends. And this, therefore, is the changed attitude to the problem into which experience leads us—it bids us, instead of criticising and complaining, rather listen and learn.

But our problem is far from solved; indeed it is, at its most crucial point, not yet touched. For there is another broad comment of experience upon pain, and this intensifies instead of relieving the enigma.

Nothing is more apparent to the observant and sympathetic mind in connection with human suffering than its often sheer injustice. Here is the real *crux* of the challenge to faith in this matter, and the more we see of life the more keenly is this felt. A man, truly taught by experience, will not say his own sufferings are unjust; on the contrary, he will say that God has not dealt with him according to his sins

[1] A. de Musset, *Confession d'un enfant du Siècle,* III. ii.

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nor rewarded him according to his iniquities. But as he looks at the suffering world his heart is often pierced with the appalling wrong in it. Think of but a single aspect of it. Think of the sufferings of thousands of helpless and innocent little children, whose lives from their birth are a daily appeal for a justice which seems to have no ear in earth or heaven. Considerations about moral development do not apply here. A child's character needs happiness, not anguish. And the child does not deserve it. A bad man deserves it, but not his innocent child. Yet a man is vicious, and his child bears the penalty. The thing is unjust. We say of it as the people of Israel said of it in the days of Ezekiel; 'The way of the Lord is not equal.' It is not irreverence that says this; it is the finest ethical instinct of our nature. Here the Christian thought of God's love and righteousness seems to meet a shriek of contradiction—or, in the pleading eyes and wan faces of the little children of whom I spoke, a silent condemnation severer still. We recall a happy little child whom

Jesus once placed in the midst of His disciples to teach them a lesson of faith. There are in this world other little children, and when we place them in our midst our faith is simply struck dumb.

This, I say again, is the acutest part of the whole problem—a part which experience seems to do nothing to ameliorate. It is a difficulty which sinks very deep into the mind of many people—especially, I believe, many women. Sometimes it is said that women have not a good capacity for justice: that may or may not be. But they certainly have a keen sense of injustice. It is a woman's pen which, faced with this problem, wrote, as with a flame: 'There is no justice.'[1]

Well, but we must look into it, not with the flame of anger but with the light of reason. There is a mental habit which is always salutary and is never more useful than when one is shut up to a difficulty—namely, to think out what is involved in the alternative. Let us employ that method here. The problem is

[1] Olive Schreiner's *Times and Seasons.*

that, when a man does evil, not only he but others who are innocent are involved in suffering. But think what it would mean if this were not so. That would mean that the man's life is something isolated from all other lives, terminating in itself. It would mean, in short, that each man lives to himself, and that we are not members one of another. Does any thinking person desire that this should be the law of human life? It would not only impoverish life; it would extinguish it in any real and rich sense. It would make impossible the whole progress of humanity from age to age and race to race and man to man. What is it which makes the riches and reality, even the very meaning, of life? It is not what each man has merited, earned, achieved. It is, far more, what he has inherited and received from others. Without this solidarity in the life of humanity our life would be unthinkable. We must remember this great law or fact of solidarity when we are questioning the justice of God in the problem before us.

John Stuart Mill in his essay on Nature (one

of his three famous *Essays on Religion*) lays down the extraordinary proposition that, if God were omnipotent, the just law for Him to enforce would be that 'each person's share of suffering and happiness would be exactly proportioned to that person's good or evil deeds, and no human being would have a worse lot than another without worse deserts.' Well, this is a strange and difficult world in which we live; but, after all, I am thankful to live in the world I do rather than in the world Mill would thus organise in the name of justice. He would indeed, as Charlotte Brontë once said of him, 'make a hard, dry, dismal world of it.' My lot in life reduced to what is exactly proportioned to my individual deeds would leave me morally and intellectually in absolute starvation. It is others' great and good deeds—others' moral triumphs, others' intellectual conquests—which have made my life a life at all. And if no human being should have a worse lot than another without worse desert, then no human being should have a

better lot without better desert. What desert then had Mill to the advantage of culture and civilisation which a poor prehistoric savage was denied, though his claim, 'exactly proportioned to that person's good or evil deeds,' may have been quite as good as that of a modern philosopher's? We cannot run the idea of justice on the lines of this false individualism. Mill would be quite right if man were an isolated unit. But man is not an isolated unit: science, philosophy, religion, and experience all combine to repudiate that figment of the doctrinaire.[1] 'We are members one of another.' We live together and progress together and sin together and suffer together. Our life is personal because it is not only in-

[1] That science (in its doctrine of heredity) and also religion and experience attest the idea of solidarity in the conception of humanity is clear; but it is not so clear as regards philosophy, which may seem—in, for example, such typical thinkers as Augustine in the Middle Ages and Descartes, the 'father of modern philosophy'—to emphasise rather the relatedness of personality to itself or what we call self-consciousness. But the greatest philosophical masters have realised that self-consciousness is more than individual. Aristotle, who de-

dividual but also organic. It is the greatest law of humanity, and without it the very word humanity would have no meaning. To repeal it would not be justice; it would be an end to life in any human sense of the word. And surely no thinking person will suggest that it might be repealed as regards evil, while retained as regards good. This will not bear any scrutiny. We saw, in the last chapter, how disadvantageous for morality would be a world with one set of neutral laws for virtue and another for vice. Nature metes out its rewards to men impartially—that is to say, justly. When evil consequences follow, it is not because the law—or the law-giver—is unjust;

scribed man as a being 'essentially social' (*Pol.* i. 2), kept hold of the idea all through his system, especially in the intimate connection he established between ethics and politics. Similarly Plato, writing really on human nature and 'how to live best,' called his work *The Republic* because the best life is essentially social. Again, Kant in the third—the most difficult and least known—of his *Critiques,* emphasises that existence is an organism, the parts of which can be understood not as existing by themselves or for their own sake, but as a whole, each part of which is also part of the rest. This is an important element in Kant's doctrine of personality, which has been neglected by expositors.

it is because men's deeds have been evil.[1] Ezekiel's reply in the name of God to the people who murmured that 'the way of the Lord is not equal' is true: 'Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?'[2] There are, as I admitted at the outset, aspects of the problem of suffering which are distinguishable from the problem of sin; but in the end to this deeper and darker mystery we are thrown back.

And yet can we leave the question of suffering and pass to that of sin with merely such a cold philosophic word as solidarity? That word does illumine the problem to some extent; but, after all, human suffering is not a problem of philosophy; it is a problem of persons—of lives rather than of life. When you have said all that your wise philosophy can say about suffering, still *the sufferers remain.* Sit in a darkened room beside some one

[1] I admit this does not meet the problem of the unmerited suffering occasioned by great natural calamities. But the unswerving operation of the great forces of nature can be challenged only by a wisdom which can judge a universe or a folly which forgets it cannot.

[2] Ezekiel xviii. 25. The whole chapter shows how old are our 'modern' problems.

who is racked with pain, and your doctrine of solidarity is a poor support to your faith in a good God. We have not faced the real challenge of pain to the soul till we have faced this—faced it in the cruellest concrete of the actual agony of a personal life. I have said (at the close of the previous chapter) that it is always easy to generalise. It is easy to generalise even about the problem of pain. It is not easy to repeat your fine moral generalisations before a living soul—man or woman or child—who is being riven with helpless anguish. That no one may say I am slipping through this topic on generalisations, I shall quote the following picture of what pain really is from a modern novel of exceptional truthfulness:—

> 'When he returned to the sick-room, the child was in convulsions. He stood and watched it, as though he would kill himself with the sight; these small clenched hands, white with bluish nails; these staring eyes, almost rolling out of their sockets; this distorted mouth, and the little teeth grinding like iron against a stone—oh, it was terrible, and yet this was not the worst. No, when the convulsions ceased and the little body, growing soft and flexible

again, abandoned itself to the joy of the lesser pain —the fear that came into the child's eyes when it dimly perceived that the pain was returning, the beseeching appeals for help as the torture came nearer and nearer; oh, to see all this and be powerless to help, help even with his heart's blood, with everything that he possessed! He raised his clenched fist threatingly to heaven, he seized the child with an insane idea of flight, and then, flinging himself upon his knees, he prayed to the God in heaven, who holds the earth in subjection by means of trials and discipline, who sends need and sickness, suffering and death, who wills that every knee be bent in fear and trembling, from whom no flight is possible— either to the uttermost seas or the nethermost depths —to Him, the God, who, if it pleases Him, tramples upon the heart we love best in the world and tortures it beneath His foot until it is once more the dust of which He created it.

'With such thoughts did Niels Lyhne pray to God, and, casting himself helplessly before the throne of heaven, acknowledge that His was the power and His alone.

'But the child's sufferings continued.'[1]

[1] *Niels Lyhne,* by J. P. Jacobsen, ch. xiii. (E. T., *Siren Voices,* p. 261). Jacobsen was a Danish writer of remarkable genius who died of consumption in 1885 at the age of thirty-six, leaving to literature only a fragment of what he might have done.

This is from a novel, but it is not fiction. There is our problem of pain in the concrete, and before it our fine talk about the moral character of suffering and about the great law of human solidarity are a kind of blasphemy. The cruelty—and to a child—is so undeniable that the problem is unendurable. The mind which is sincere is simply silent before it. The philosopher's generalisations falter, and only the professional pietist, babbling about all being for the best, keeps on talking. His observations are highly admirable. But even faith is almost ashamed of them. It is better to say nothing. There is simply nothing to be said.

No, there is absolutely nothing more to be said about the facts—these brutal and desperate facts. And it is no help to believe that in the end it will all be made clear—to think of God as holding, as it were in an envelope, the explanation of the mystery to be given to us some future day. That may and does suffice for some of the pains and problems of life; but it does not suffice when the sword pierces

the heart and twists itself therein. A God who is to be the explanation of things is not enough here. The poor father's heart, torn with suffering with his tortured child, has something in it greater than this coldly wise and watching Deity with His final reason for everything. There is no light whatever to be shed on such a problem as this along lines such as these. The solution is not any attempted intellectual construction of the facts, and not even a faith that God holds their intellectual solution. It is deeper than that. It is a new thought of God—of God as love.

How shall love act in face of facts or suffering such as have just been described? Nothing is sorer to watch than to see a little child suffer. All the love in the human heart is moved to suffer too. If *this* be nowhere in God, then the impassibility of the Almighty Creator is a less noble thing than the sympathy of the impotent creature. But if, on the other hand, God is not One who stands apart from human suffering, even though holding the explanation of it in His hand, but One who Himself comes

into it and shares it, that were a thought of God upon which faith could stand in any anguish. That character in God, that passion in God would be faith's deliverance. It would not, I repeat, intellectually answer the question of suffering. But you cannot arraign a God who Himself suffers too.

Such a thought of God as this—is it more than a vain and indeed inappropriate phantasy? It is spurned by great thinkers of old and of to-day. We all know those lines of Lucretius, which have never ceased to resound within the human mind, which picture Deity as in its very essence unmoved, untouched, untroubled—*'privata dolore omni,'* removed from human grief—*'semota a rebus nostris,'* remote from our concerns.[1] In our own day, Dr. Eucken bids us reject all idea of a God who takes our misery upon Himself as 'a decidedly wrong note.'[2] Well, there is little use discussing this as an idea of poetry or philosophy, ancient or modern. It is something

[1] *De Rerum Natura,* ii. 648-9.

[2] *Truth of Religion,* p. 433.

quite beyond the power of the mind to project for itself. It simply stands or falls with the thought of God which is revealed in the fact of Jesus Christ. If in some most real sense God was in Christ—the Christ who was acquainted with grief, who bore our sufferings and carried our sorrows—then and then only does that thought of God of which I have spoken take real shape and strength in the mind. I desire to remember it must be said with care and reverence that God thus suffers too, and not so much because it borders on an ancient heresy—some heresies become orthodox in time—but because we must never forget how infinitely God transcends our nature. Yet it is no unworthy thought of the Father of our spirits that He can suffer as also rejoice with His children. But, assuredly, mere thinking about life cannot say it; if it be said at all, it is only in Christ.

In a later chapter I shall discuss whether the view of Christ involved in this be real and credible. Meanwhile let us ask, in closing this chapter, how, even if such a thought of God

be true, does it help? Certainly it does not alter the poignant facts. Despite even this thought of God, 'the child's sufferings continued.' Yet such a thought of God makes all the difference. The difference is not merely the negative one that it quiets our murmuring to see that supreme One in the same case. This aspect of it has been sympathetically expressed by the pen of Mr. Balfour:—

> 'If they suffer, did not He, on their account, suffer also? If suffering falls not always on the most guilty, was not He innocent? Shall they cry aloud that the world is ill-arranged, when He, for their sakes, subjected Himself to their conditions?'[1]

This is true, yet it is but a little of the truth. Something far deeper and tenderer and more experimental is needed when the soul is really in straits. It is not merely that Christ, too, had His pains to endure; it is that He bears our pains with us. And thus the sufferer distraught with his own agonies or those of his loved ones (which are harder to bear and far harder to understand than his own) is, to

[1] A. J. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*, p. 352.

quote the fine words of the spiritual mind of Dora Greenwell, 'met from the eyes and brows of Him who was indeed acquainted with grief, by a look of solemn recognition such as may pass between friends who have endured between them some strange and sacred sorrow and *are through it united in a bond that cannot be broken.*'[1] I shall not multiply words about this. It is not by eloquent writing upon it that it is brought home to the soul as spiritual truth. It is only as you take your cross of agony to His Cross, who means for us the very heart of God, and there learn—even with the sword piercing your life or the life of your dearest—to know God nearer than ever before. This is what makes all the difference for faith. It does not explain the mystery. It does not remove the facts. But it makes all the difference if we hear in the darkness—and speaking with that peculiar tenderness which a loving voice takes into its tone in the darkness—a voice saying:

'O heart I made, a heart beats here.'

[1] *Colloquia Crucis*, p. 14.

Then—not till then—can we accept God's will even at the worst. Indeed, we would not have, for ourselves or for others, anything else than the will of that God who feels and suffers too. *His* will is indeed—even when it is uttered pain—our peace.

Some one will say that people often imagine in the dark that they hear voices. That is true, and I repeat we must discuss in a future chapter whether such a faith can be verified in the cold daylight of historical criticism. Meanwhile on this I shall say but one word. Does not every one of us practically regard the suffering love of Jesus Christ as indeed the love and sympathy of God Himself? For why is it that we do not find here the final arraignment of the divine goodness? Why is it that this unparalleled suffering, unjustly inflicted on the most innocent, does not make us more than ever unbelievers? Why does it not awaken tears of pity and a torrent of protest against God? Because—this is the one reason—dimly we all discern in this passion more than a human tragedy. Because we feel, however

falteringly, that here, in a way we cannot define but cannot dismiss, is the love *of God* suffering for and with men. That is the final word on the problem of pain: it is enough for faith.

And so to conclude we may, I think, say this about it all. We may say that the mystery of suffering, while difficult and, to many minds, oppressive, still is not a problem which in the end silences faith, and for this reason, that the more deeply we look into pain in human life the more we can find God in it. We find in it God's moral purpose and work in character; we find God's great and just laws of life between man and man; we find, at the last and worst, God suffering too. We cannot explain pain, but if we thus find God within it, then faith is not put to shame.

But, behind this problem, is a darker one of which we cannot speak thus.

III

THE ATHEISTIC FACT

'What you are now saying,' I suggested, 'seems to imply the existence of two original and almost equal powers. It sounds very like Manichæism.'

'So,' returned he quietly, 'I have been sometimes told, but the days for me are long past (if indeed for me they ever existed) when a word or a name could alarm me. I have learned to hold with Newman that one of the surest marks of a living faith is its disregard of consequences, and among all Butler's deep sayings there are no words which I endorse more fully than those in which he bids us know that, if a truth be once established, *objections* are nothing—the one being founded on our knoweldge, the other on our ignorance.'

DORA GREENWELL.

CHAPTER III

THE ATHEISTIC FACT

This age, which is sensitive to the spectacle of suffering, is one which, in many respects, hardly realises sin as a problem at all. Sir Oliver Lodge tells us that 'the higher man of to-day is not worrying' about it. Well, if this be the right point of view it must be remarked, in the first place, that a good deal both of the teaching and also of the life of One whom we have been accustomed to think of as the Highest Man of any day was a mistake or at least an exaggeration, and it seems a pity that Jesus should have died for sin instead of simply dismissing it.

There is, however, nothing particularly high in dealing with things other than as they really are. The question is whether sin is a fact of life, and a fact so great as rightly to trouble the conscience and the mind. If it is, we ought

to 'worry' about it; to say of it, with Renan, *je le supprime* is not high but only shallow. Now it is an easy thing to regard sin as a not very difficult or deadly problem for either life or faith so long as we deal with it in an abstract way. Nothing, indeed, is easier than to make a number of facile observations about the 'negative' element in existence and so on, and to disguise what sin is under these semi-philosophical generalities. Here, again, it is so easy to generalise. But no man who looks straight at the facts of life—his own life or the life of the world of men—can be content to treat the matter thus. Think for a little what sin is and what it does. There are times when not to worry over sin seems the counsel of everything about us. On some fine morning, when the sun is bright and the air is fresh and the world is beautiful, it seems morbid even to name sin. But, as a matter of actual fact, on what falsenesses and foulnesses in human hearts and lives has the glorious sun dawned, what base and bad lives will breathe its divine air, what scenes of shame and unkindness and

cruelty and wickedness will be enacted even on this day of beauty. This is not morbid imagining; it is the barest fact. Not to worry over it is no sign of height of mind; certainly to feel the burden of it is no sign of a low mind. Every man with a heart and a conscience knows that the problem here is the darkest problem of the world's history and also the final issue within his own being.

Moreover, to faith it presents a problem which is peculiarly acute—one much more acute than any problem of pain. It is not for nothing that the facts of sin are so little faced and that the topic is so often dealt with in evasive generalities. For to any faith—philosophic as well as religious—it is unwelcome to a degree which makes the mind want to do anything rather than face it as it really is. Why this is so can be stated in a sentence. In the problem of pain, despite many and great perplexities, we found that the more we pressed into it the more was it possible to discern God in it. But the more we look into sin the more impossible do we find it to associate it with God. Its very

definition in the conscience is something 'against Thee.' In short, suffering, while a difficult fact, is yet a divine fact; but sin is not less than the one atheistic fact in the world.

One is well aware how hopelessly orthodox this sounds to the philosophic ear. A philosophy of evil to-day hardly calls itself such unless it treats sin as a phase in the moral evolution, and as thus a part—an intelligible and necessary part—of the scheme of things. I think I may claim to be not insensible to the attraction of this as a system of thought. But the reason why I, for one, remain hopelessly orthodox on this topic is simply that I have never been able to find in this way of thinking any real statements of the facts about sin as these actually exist in the world without or within. I read Spinoza on evil.[1] As a structure of philosophy his system is infinitely more attractive to the mind of any one at all influenced by the idea of the philosophic demand for synthesis than is, say, Augustine's. But in Spinoza are hardly any of the facts about sin

[1] *Ethics*, pt. iv. *passim*.

as I know them in life, while in Augustine these are there in all their intractable truth. Spinoza and Augustine, discussing the topic, are like men not only of differing views but inhabiting different planets. The question is which view is truer to the facts of this planet, not which is more acceptable to the philosophic temper. It is from this point of view I shall consider the matter in this chapter, which must be, I am afraid, not such a light one as some modern theologians are able to produce even on this dark topic.

Philosophers of moral evil such as I have indicated vary in method and in terminology, but all agree in one essential feature. Whether metaphysical or dialectical or materialistic, they agree in treating sin as a phenomenon of the natural world. Nature is the supreme category of the modern mind. Man is part of this nature. Everything in man, including the moral phenomena of what is called sin, is regarded as in and of the system and order of the natural sphere. Sin, in other words, is and must be natural. That is not to say it is not to be

resisted and transcended; but it is to say it is a fact of natural existence and not absurd or an anomaly. Thus the eminent English scientific philosopher whom I have named—and for whose work in imbuing a thoroughly scientific outlook on the universe with profoundly spiritual conceptions I wish to speak in terms of sincere and respectful appreciation—says sin is 'akin to dirt, to disease and weeds;' and again, that 'the contrast between good and evil can be well illustrated by the contrast between heat and cold,' adding 'there is nothing evil about cold itself.'[1]

Let us examine this by the standard not of orthodoxy but of experience. Has it any kind of support in what in our own lives we find sin to be? Let a man with a clear mind and a candid conscience examine some sin in his life. He has, for example, told a base lie, or committed an act of sensuality, or has been unkind and selfish. To tell this man that his bad conscience for his having been untrue or

[1] Sir Oliver Lodge's *Man and the Universe,* p. 242; *Substance of Faith allied with Science,* p. 48.

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impure or unloving may be 'well illustrated' by his feeling cold on some winter day is just to trifle with and even mock everything real in his moral being. The comparison is absolutely irrelevant. You might just as well compare his sin to the Differential Calculus or the Battle of Waterloo or Tariff Reform or any other thing your fancy fixes on. These many natural facts have simply no point of contact with the moral facts of experience in a man who has sinned. Indeed, if we take them to the test of some classical example of the sense of sin their irrelevance reaches the point of indecency. I shall not take any strained or morbid cases of what the author of the *Varieties of Religious Experience*[1] calls 'the sick soul.' I shall take two of the shortest and simplest and sanest confessions of sin possible—utterances which can be echoed in any honest experience. Take the psalmist's 'Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned;' then say (if you can get your lips

[1] The fault of James's interesting and valuable book is that it deals too much with extreme cases and does not build enough on the data of normal religious experience. Truth is best found on the highways of life.

to say it) that a good illustration of this and similar utterances in the fifty-first Psalm would be when a man, in the heats and chills of a fever, says his temperature sank last night below normal. Take the apostle who bowed his head in shame before Jesus with the words: 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord;' then say (again if you can) that this is, so to speak, as if some one who had fallen into a filthy bog should tell a lady in a white dress that she must not come too near to him. I am not going to waste space in arguing about this. A man's experience needs no arguments to show that the kind of 'sin' which is illustrated by the thermometer or akin to dirt is not in the remotest degree like, is not in the same world with, the sin he knows in his heart and conscience. It is purely a fancy article of a philosophy which has forgotten the facts of life.

This, then, is the first thing which experience tells us about sin, that it is a phenomenon not of what we call the natural, but of another class and order which we call the moral. Now, certainly, the natural world and the moral are

not to be isolated from one another. They are related to one another and touch one another. Particularly do they meet in man, who is a member of both. But they must not be confused with one another, nor are the categories of the one to be applied to the other. The moral realm possesses—or rather, one should say, is constituted by—one fundamental category, of which nature simply knows nothing. The difference between right and wrong, which is the constituent category of morals, is a difference, which is destroyed when it is classed with the difference, say, between 30° and 90° Fahrenheit. It is a distinction absolute within itself, not variable with terms and seasons. It is to this absolute moral realm that the phenomenon of sin belongs, and any discussion of it which treats it as a phenomenon of a relative and neutral world is simply not a discussion of sin at all.

One other way of treating the topic on the part of those whom I am inclined to call the fanciful theologians—by whom I mean those who are out of touch with the facts or the

subject—I may more briefly mention. They tell us that sin is not so much that which ought not to be as that which is not. It is a mere 'negative,' a 'not being,' while good is positive being. What is, or was, called 'the New Theology' is fond of such phrases, and one exponent of it—a preacher not without genius in his spirit if only he could be delivered from the misapprehension of thinking it a genius for metaphysics—seems inclined to adopt the aphorism that 'the Devil is a vacuum.'[1] Well, I am not competent to describe the devil, of whose being I know as little as even a neo-theologian does. But I know something of myself. And to tell me then sin within me is a 'non-existent' is a kind of sorry jest. The bad in me is as real as the good. I apply to it every available test of reality, and find it existent in everything which is most real in my being—thought, affection, will, habit, character. Indeed, if I do not take care, it will become my most essential self, and I may be a bad man in every sense in which I am a man at all.

[1] *The New Theology*, by the Rev. R. J. Campbell, pp. 43-4.

And around me in the world I see—not that I judge them, but I see them—bad men as distinctly as good men, and badness possessing all the reality which any kind of life does. If any philosophy says sin is a 'non-existent,' that is a saying illuminative not of sin but only of the philosophy which is so far out of touch with life as to say it.

On this and things like this I cannot longer dwell. We must pass to the problem which confronts us if we reject such facile theories of evil and face it as it really is—the atheistic fact in the world.

Do not these very words proclaim the hopelessness of the problem? What can faith say when confronted with a fact the very definition of which is that it is 'against God'—a fact, therefore, which cannot be made harmonious with God? This is why there cannot be a rational philosophy of sin. All attempts to explain sin end in something quite different—the explaining of it away into something else. There is a distinction between these two results which many people who write on this subject

seem not able to appreciate. But while a final philosophy of sin, from its very terms, is impossible, a theodicy in face of sin may be possible; and it is this which faith is entitled to require. It may seem worse than useless to touch on so profound a question within the limits of what is left of this chapter; but, after all, it is of the greatest themes that it is true that many words cannot say more than few.

I do not wish to get involved in speculative coils on the subject; it is available facts about sin which most demand attention. For this reason I shall deal briefly with the highly speculative problem of what is called the divine permission of moral evil. The main positions of a philosophic theodicy as to this may be stated thus. If we assume God as not the Infinite Thing but as Supreme Moral Personality—and this is at this point legitimately assumed, for only on this assumption does any need for a theodicy about evil arise—then the only world really worthy of Him and really expressive of His true Being and Character would be a world which is more than a vast

mechanical toy but is a world of moral persons. The point is stated thus in Professor Ward's notable Gifford Lecture: 'God is Love. And what must that world be that is worthy of such love? The only worthy object of love is just love. It must then be a world that can love God.'[1] It is in the light of this consideration that philosophy considers this problem of the permission of sin. Would it not have been to destroy such a world if the possibility of not loving God had been shut out by the predetermination of the Creator? Would not that have been the reducing of creation to (as Sir Thomas Browne, I think, phrases it) 'what it was on the sixth day'—to a world, that is, emptied of moral agents whose history is not merely mechanical and physical but is a history of ethical and spiritual freedom? Certainly this would have been to prevent sin; but would it not also have prevented love and all morality? For, to quote Professor Ward again—I quote him because he does not discuss the theme in the merely theological interest—'love

[1] *The Realm of Ends*, ch. xx. p. 453.

is free: in a ready-made world, then, it could have no place.' Here I know the Pilate in the reader's mind will say: 'What is freedom?' and will not stay for an answer. I will not attempt the answer. What moral freedom is can hardly be analysed or even defined, because it is one of those ultimate and final categories which are not reducible to simple elements, and of which we can only say—as we say of right and, perhaps, beauty—*Si non rogas, intelligo.* But of these ultimate and final categories we can say some things, even to Pilate, which they are *not.* And of moral freedom we can certainly say that it does not mean a character which is good because it is deprived of the possibility of being other than good. So if God's world were to be a world of moral persons, it would seem that must not mean a world deprived of the possibility of their being other than good. To have prevented this would have been to prevent a moral world at all—at least in any sense in which the word morality has ethical content for an experience. And that would be to prevent a world expressive of God *Himself.*

This reasoning and suggestion I merely outline, and do not press it far. One should not seek to develop a logical demonstration on such a topic. And I pass from these abstract considerations to the more definitely historical questions about sin.

The first historical question about sin obviously is the circumstances of its appearance in the world, but to this it is impossible to give a historical answer. There is no available evidence to enable us to do so. I do not suppose we shall be asked to-day in any seriously educated quarter to take the stories in the opening chapters of Genesis as literal history, profoundly and permanently meaningful as they are; and, apart from that, there is no professed source of information on the subject anywhere. One observes a tendency in some modern writers on this question to seek evidence from the story of evolution. Thus a recent Hulsean lecturer thinks we have the 'empirical' source of sin, and even necessity for it, in man's difficulty 'of enforcing his inherited organic nature to obey a moral law which he has only gradu-

ally been enabled to discern.'[1] But while some relevant observations about evil are suggested from the point of view of evolution, it seems to me that evolution is the channel of temptation rather than the source of sin. That this is true is visible in our own lives. We to-day have just the difficulty referred to above of enforcing an inherited organic nature to obey a law we have gradually discerned. Every man who—to take no higher an instance—feels he ought to get up earlier in the morning, but finds his 'inherited organic nature' unwilling to begin doing it, knows this 'difficulty.' Yet surely we know it is 'one thing to be tempted' from old habits of the body and 'another thing to fall' (or, in the case suggested, not to rise!). Moreover, as bearing even on temptation, this association of the origination of evil with the organic nature which man has inherited is inadequate and indeed inappropriate, because man's most characteristic sins do not arise out of the animal at all. Such sins as ambition or

[1] Tennant's *Origin and Propagation of Sin* (Hulsean Lecture for 1901-2), p. 81.

pride or fraud (which Dante calls 'man's peculiar vice[1]) are not, so to speak, a servile uprising in human nature, but are the crimes of the royalty of reason itself. For these and other considerations, I feel that the pursuit of this line by which the origin of sin is sought under suggestions from the story of evolution does not help us very much. The real origin of sin lies in something deeper than the clinging garment of our physical descent.

If, then, in the records neither of sacred narrative nor of physical evolution we find the clue we need, where shall we seek it? The answer is in the *grande profundum* of personality. Let us here avoid all darkening with verbiage, for here certainly the remark made a moment ago is true, that many words cannot say more than few. The one thing to say is this. *Man is an ego; sin is the ego become the egoist.* A beast cannot be an egoist; it may seek the satisfaction of this or that desire, but it cannot seek itself. A personal being, knowing itself as an end, seeks, in the gratification

[1] *Inferno*, xi. 26.

of its desires, not merely their satisfaction but the satisfaction of the self. Thus a dog drinks merely to slake the physical sense of thirst; a man often does more than that, and drinks on, long past the satisfaction of mere thirst, to attain some further satisfaction of himself in enjoyment or, it may be, drunkenness. It is this false self which is the author of sin. Thus to specify it is, of course, not to explain it. If we ask what thus perverts the idea of the self there is no answer. We have simply no data from which to construct an answer. To speculate about it is indeed, in Goethe's phrase, to be led about a barren heath by an evil spirit. We simply do not know the deeps of the mystery of our being. We call ourselves self-conscious—that is, self-knowing—but we are only superficially so. There are in human personality great subterrânean areas into which we have never penetrated. There is nothing to be ashamed of intellectually in saying this: does the most confident scientist know any better the mystery of the atom? There are places where it is philosophical to confess

ignorance and where the true religion is an agnosticism. And it is a part of true knowledge to know where knowledge stops.[1]

Now, however, it will be asked where is any theodicy? Is it simply given up at the crucial point under the plea of the mystery of personality? Not so. For, while personality is an abysmal deep which we cannot fathom, there arise out of it at least two clear and conclusive things about sin in relation to God and in relation to ourselves, and these are sufficient, if not to complete a theodicy—they are, I shall say presently, not sufficient for that—at least to make the arraignment of God for sin untrue to the facts.

[1] The theological student who wishes to ponder further over this matter should assimilate (which is more than merely read) the fundamental position of Augustine, which is that man's whole nature is made for God—*Fecisti nos ad Te*—and in its right state only in continued relatedness to Him. This applies to the self-conscious being's idea of itself as well as to anything else. Sin originates in the self-conscious personality, which can say, 'I am I,' saying it 'as though it were of himself.' It is thus a *defectio*—arising not out of the flesh but from pride—or, as Augustine says of the fallen angels, a 'not sticking fast unto God.' The value of this idea of the sinful will as 'deficient' appears when Augustine comes to describe grace, which is thus a restoring of man, including the will,

One is this. It is something so intimately associated with the moral personality that it may be best stated in personal terms and even in the first person. The surest fact about sin in my life is just that my sin is *my* sin. It may have circumstances and conditions which are not mine, but it becomes sin in my conscience because and when it is mine. Of course, one is aware that the sense of this is dimmed and even denied for the modern mind by the consciousness of such forces in life as that of heredity, which apparently mortgage life, even moral life, so heavily and sum it up as nothing more than a resultant of determined conditions. Now this 'given' element in life is not only indisputably true but is also an invaluable

to its right and native state of relatedness to God. It does not thereby abrogate freedom but, on the contrary, renews it, and leads it not to a mere non-moral neutrality of choice but to its true 'law of liberty,' which says not 'I can do what I like' but 'I love Thy law.' This idea of rational and moral, as opposed to a merely indifferent, freedom is seen in a man of long-stablished nobility of character, of whom we say he 'could not' do some base deed, and yet not meaning that by his character he has forfeited moral freedom. I write this note to invite a deeper study of the greatest of all doctors on this high topic.

truth; I asserted it and built upon it in the previous chapter when showing the bearing of solidarity on the problem of the injustice of human suffering. But it is not the whole truth. Man's life, which certainly has its roots in nature, has thus an inheritance, physical, mental, moral, for which he is not responsible; but when you have summed up all the elements in that you have not yet summed up the life of man. In life, as indeed in everything which is organic, the whole is more than the sum of the parts; two and two are here more than four. And no man can sum up his moral being by piecing together various given parts; after this is done, he confronts the result with something more, which is just himself. Responsibility is the assertion that our moral acts are the acts of this self, and not simply of an addition sum of figures dictated by this and that in the conditions of life. It is here, then, that my sin is *my* sin. This is the confession of the heart of man before sin in all ages. The writer of the fifty-first Psalm did not know the doctrine of heredity in its modern scientific form, but he

knew the essential fact of it when he wrote: 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me;' yet because he knew also, if not philosophically at least morally and practically, a self deeper than all that, he said too: 'I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.' And so says the conscience of every honest man. Here we have, indeed, the clearest and most authentic facts about moral life and moral responsibility —that our life is something more than a sum of innumerable constituent conditions, and that in that something more, which is our self, sin becomes *ours*. No man gets past the one fact with permission of true philosophy, or past the other without violence to his conscience.

But this hardly ends the matter. For it may be admitted that sin is our sin, and yet the real responsibility for it still lies on the Author of our being, who has made us what we are, and we are not to be blamed for following our nature. Here emerges to contravene this another fact of life—that sin is not our true nature. It is difficult to see this in the general.

The universality of moral evil in humanity—One excepted—leads our minds to accept sin as the normal thing and the sinless One as abnormal. But, on the contrary, it is '*our* life' which is, as Byron cried,

> 'a false nature—'tis not in
> The harmony of things.'[1]

And that this is true appears, I think, whenever the honest and healthy soul puts it to the practical test of life. Let us not look at it as a general and abstract proposition; there it sounds unreal. But take not life at large but some place in our own life where are opposing each other, on the one hand, the call of some evil lust and, on the other, the call of the sinless Christ. Where, within that area, does the honest and healthy soul see its truer nature? Not in sin. Well, if that sin is not my true life in that particular place, neither is it the true life of humanity at large. Sin is not our nature. Mr. Chesterton's answer to the question of the meaning of the Fall is exactly correct, 'that

[1] *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, iv. 126.

whatever I am, I am not myself.'[1] Sin is—and here is a most important point not for practical life only but for our whole philosophy of religion—the *anti-natural.* This is one reason why—to anticipate for a moment the topic of the next chapter—there is need for and reason in a supernatural to meet it.

Here then are two things which emerge clear out of the unplumbed depth of personality, that our sin is our sin and that it is not our true nature. This does not mean that we can always fix guilt on the individual. No one can look at life, no one can enter into the story of a sinning soul, no one can read such a play as Mr. Galsworthy's *Silver Box* and much else in modern literature, without feeling poignantly how sin is more than individual and how ravelled is the web of human responsibility. What has been said in the immediately foregoing paragraphs certainly does not mean that we are to judge one another. What it means is that we are not cheaply and untruly to arraign God. Such arraignment has sometimes

[1] *Orthodoxy,* p. 292.

a plausibility of a superficial kind which easily lends itself to a would-be bold blasphemy. A well-known quatrain says:—

'Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake;
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blackened, Man's forgiveness give—and take!'[1]

I have heard this described as 'tremendous.' But nothing is tremendous which is not true.

If then these be the facts emerging out of the abyss of personality, we may return to the general position that they do not drive faith from its hold on God despite the insoluble elements in the problem of evil. Facts remain facts even though they are surrounded by an impenetrable darkness; we may therefore not unjustifiably maintain that the available *data* of our moral being do not deny but rather uphold the divine character even in face of the enigma of sin in the world. I think we can adhere to this. But it is impossible to find it very convincing. It is impossible not to feel

[1] *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám,* lxxxi.

how inadequate it is when it is offered as all that can be said in God's name in face of the actual realities of the appalling mess (if I may call it so) which sin has made in the world, and before the degradation and disgrace and despair of the lives of men because of it. As in the case of pain, we were in the end brought up against the cruel concrete facts of what pain actually is and does, and realised that, after all our philosophical comments on the subject, the sufferers remain, so here, when we have talked at large about a philosophy of evil, sinners remain—souls soaked through with lusts, doing the deeds of iniquity daily, living for sin and dying in it. I took a page from a novel to help us realise how cruel pain is, but no novel ever painted the badness of sin. Here let men look steadily into their own hearts and upon their own lives; I do not think they will write down the result *verbatim* on the page of any book. This is the real problem of sin, and it comes home to the conscience as really as some physical agony may come home to the flesh. To offer to a world or a soul that cries out

'What must I do to be saved?' the thesis of a theodicy about a world of free and moral persons is no better than to prate to a man in agony of body or mind that all is for the best. Honestly, when one begins to think what sin really is in life—in my life and yours and that of the whole world—were it not better to have left the subject alone unless there is more to say than this?

Here we are precisely at the same point as that to which we were led up at the close of the previous chapter. When we found there that no more was to be said by philosophy about the facts of pain, we turned towards a new thought about God as—that is, if the 'acknowledgment of God in Christ' be true—Himself entering into the problem and suffering too. It is in the same direction that we must turn now when our philosophy has said its say about sin. Is there a new thought of God in relation to sin to be found in Christ—especially in the Cross of Christ—if, again, that 'acknowledgment' be true? Certainly we cannot say here that God sins too. But we

discern here the thought of God entering into the situation which sin has created and saving us who are sinners. This is something far more convincing than a philosophical disquisition about how a world of free moral persons might sin and did sin and yet the Creator be justified. What if God be not merely self-justification; what if God may be love? He is not careful, if one may so say, to prove to us how He is not liable for the world's sin; but it seems He sends His Son to seek and to save the lost. And this is the unanswerable theodicy. Whether or not a world of free moral persons who have sinned, or a world emptied of free moral persons and thus preserved from sin, were the creation more worthy of God, certainly nothing is or can be more worthy of God than to redeem a world of sinners. 'Nothing,' as a father says (I think Tertullian), 'can be more worthy of God than man's salvation.' Than the Cross of Christ and the forgiveness in it, those who have seen God in it have never seen or imagined a divine which is or can be diviner. Do not let us mis-

take this. Here is no explanation of the existence of moral evil. I certainly cannot say with a modern writer that the Cross 'makes sense of sin'[1]—a phrase than which it would be difficult to invent one with less of the *animus* of the New Testament on this subject. Could any one imagine the Saviour saying at the Last Supper: 'This is my blood shed for the *rationalisation* of sin?' No, redemption does not make 'sense of sin;' it does not and cannot make sin to be other than what it is. But it makes the character of God glorious as we had never seen it before. The Cross is not a philosophy of evil, but it is, I say again, the unanswerable theodicy. It is the theodicy of heaven as the apostolic seer depicts it breaking out even into exultant doxology:—

> 'I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;
>
> 'Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and

[1] Rev. William Temple in *Foundation*, p. 221.

wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

'And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are therein, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.'[1]

Every creature which is . . . on the earth. Well, we are 'on the earth;' how shall we join in such a chorus? Is it not a rhapsody from some higher sphere, of which we can only say in Faust's words when he heard the angels' choir:—

'Zu jenen Sphären wag' ich nicht zu streben
Woher die holde Nachricht tont';

or is it fact and reality in this world in which we live and where—to repeat the adaptation made in the first chapter of Wordsworth's line —'we find our faith—or not at all'?

Twice have we been led up to this question. It is time now to face it.

[1] *Revelation*, v. 11-13.

IV

THE REALITY OF CHRIST

'A Personality which men could not have imagined, a Personality which must be historical and which must be divine.' WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH.

EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

CHAPTER IV

THE REALITY OF CHRIST

THE question now before us is this: we have found that the discussion of two aspects of the facts of life which most evidently challenge faith—namely, suffering and sin—leads us in each case to the conclusion that the answer to the problems which they present is in the end only to be found if God Himself can be thought of as personally loving and saving suffering and sinful man. Now is such a thought based on reality? Has such a faith any fact to stand upon which can stand against the indubitable realities of suffering and sin? This is our question. It has already been indicated, or rather assumed, that the only fact upon which this faith can stand is the fact of Jesus Christ; but perhaps this should not be at once taken for granted, and therefore I shall begin by

inquiring whether in nature or human nature there is anything which will satisfy our quest.

I think it does not need a long argument to show that a gospel of a personally loving and saving God cannot be based on the general phenomena of nature. This most certainly is not for one moment to say that nature—all nature—is not of God. We are now quite beyond that stage of religious (or irreligious) thought which found God only in selected supernatural events. Assuredly '*Deus* in *Machina*' is the true God, and science which insists on this is witnessing truly for Him. A man who cannot say this is not a believer. And yet it is true and is, indeed, plain that the personally loving and personally saving God and Father we seek must be found in something more personal than the phenomena of nature. For the relation of the Creator to us in nature is all on impersonal lines. There are in nature laws, processes, order and evolution; and it is true that these suggest an Author and Director. Yet they do not lead us to know Him as in any individual way caring for us. They may

lead us to acknowledge the idea of a Power or Principle we call God; they cannot teach us to say 'Our Father.' This, surely, requires no argument.

Moreover, this is not because our knowledge of nature is as yet incomplete. It is equally true even were our scientific knowledge perfect. Let us imagine science to have done its perfect work. Let us imagine the dream of Laplace realised and all the processes of the natural world—physical, vital, mental—reduced to a single common denominator. In short, let the molecule be found which is the egg from which the whole cosmos has come. This would be to know the world. But would it be, in any religious sense, to know God? Would it bring man, who is spirit and capable of intercourse with the Father of his spirit, and who seeks a divine love and a divine salvation, any further in the insatiable quest of the soul: 'O that I might find *Him*'? Would it do anything to answer the apostle's prayer: 'Show us the *Father* and it sufficeth us'? It would not. There is nothing more utterly futile than the

idea—cherished by some schools of science and feared by some schools of religion—that the advance of scientific knowledge of the world means the retrocession and, in the end, the supersession of religion. The place for religion remains untouched by scientific knowledge. That place is not a few still outstanding phenomenal problems, such as the origin of life or of consciousness. It may be that such phenomenal problems will ever baffle the scientific synthesis; on the other hand, science is thoroughly entitled to say that this result is not what is suggested either from the past progress of knowledge or from the conviction of the unity of the world. But however this may be, the place and need of religion remain exactly what they were. For science never finds more than impersonal law, and religion never seeks less than personal love. We must not assume the latter search is satisfied; but we certainly can say it is not and it never can be satisfied by even a complete knowledge of the phenomena of nature. *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas;* yet this is not even the be-

ginning of his blessedness who knows the love and the salvation of His Father in heaven.

But it will be said that here I am doing what in a former chapter I criticised Huxley for doing—namely, treating nature with man left out. Within the human soul are more than impersonal impressions of God. Inward intuitions are there,

> 'which, be they what they may,
> Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
> Are yet a master light of all our seeing.'[1]

And in these feelings—which in souls of higher spiritual capacity attain to be clear and commanding convictions of a faith in God's personal character and personal love, and in His speaking individually to His children and hearing and answering their prayers—must we not recognise a revelation of God intimate and personal, and such as our souls seek? On this many things may be said, but I shall here touch on only two points.

One is that, as a matter of fact and experi-

[1] Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, ix.

ence, inward intuitions and emotions of this kind do not and cannot generally maintain themselves as assured knowledge against the contradiction of outward facts in nature and life. There are, no doubt, minds of which this cannot be said—minds which, happily or otherwise, are so uncritically constituted that they can persuade themselves that what they find within is also fact without, and that their ideals are a valid standard of reality. But not many of us are so easily satisfied. And surely to take such great and definite propositions of faith as that God shares our sufferings and sacrifices Himself for our sins as securely guaranteed by any merely inward sentiments is to build on foundations palpably unable to support such a superstructure. The truth is that all inward feelings on such topics, even though we may feel them strongly and call them convictions, are so mixed up with our personal predilections and desires and imaginings that it is simply impossible to surmount the sceptical suspicions that they are, or at least may be, but a subjective conceiving of our own generalising

minds. There is no guarantee other than ourselves that they represent more than what is in and of ourselves. A faith of this kind is (if I may here repeat a phrase I have written elsewhere) 'a mere edifice of conceptions insecurely founded on the bed-rock of fact.'[1] At best, it will be a wistful rather than a stablished faith. Moreover, it is not a faith which can be presented by one to another from any ground common to both; if a man tells me *he* is sure in his experience of God's love, that does not help *me* to be sure, for he is built that way and I am not. A faith with this merely experimental basis may exist in its own retreat in souls of a certain type. It cannot face encounter with the facts of life, nor can it take possession, in the name of the gospel, of the public territory of truth.

But a second thing is to be said about this appeal within to find the assurance about God which faith seeks. When we thus turn inward we discover a new need for more than nature without and even human nature in our own

[1] *The Fact of Christ,* p. 105.

hearts can supply. We find the need of something in addition to knowledge. We find not only an intellectual darkness or dimness but also a moral defilement. We find that antinatural of which so much—by which is meant so little—was said in the previous chapter. To this new element and its need, nature and even human nature have nothing, or nothing adequate, to say. That outward nature has nothing to offer as a salving and saving message for a bad conscience is plain. But has even human nature within what really and sufficiently will meet this? Within the soul are, indeed, high moral ideas and ideals. But the *crux* of the whole matter is that we have these high moral ideas and ideals but do not obey them. The word is so trite that we forget it is also true:—

'Video meliora proboque;
Deteriora sequor.'[1]

There is here—indisputably so—no strong salvation any more than any sure revelation.

Much more might easily be said on these

[1] Ovid's *Metam.*, vii. 20.

points and on others touching on this aspect of our subject, but perhaps enough has been said for our present purpose. That purpose is certainly not to deny God in nature and human nature. But it is to show—what indeed is indisputable fact—that in the general phenomena of nature there is not manifested the personal love of God, and in the ideals of human nature there is not salvation. It is, therefore, in something more than nature and human nature that we must look for a basis for a faith in God personally loving and saving suffering and sinful men. It is in what is commonly called the 'supernatural.' One has scruples in using the word, not in the least because of any desire to evade or minimise the truth it is meant to represent, but simply because it is so misused and misunderstood. If we use it, let us be clear as to what it means. It does not mean the splitting of the universe as with a hatchet into two sections, in one of which is natural law and in the other a God who is *exlex*. There is but one universe, and God who is in it all is ever reason and cannot

deny Himself. What it means may be most simply stated by saying that the antithesis is not between nature and miracle, or between law and non-law, but between the impersonal and the personal action of God. In the general processes of nature God expresses Himself impersonally, just as a king does in the laws of his realm. But it need be no irrational contradiction of this that God, for adequate reason, should express Himself further on personal lines, manifesting His love to individual souls and saving individual lives. This is the only supernatural in which religion has interest. A mere thaumaturgical display or a mere unexplained wonder is of no value for religion; it is the personally living and saving God which is the one thing of value in the supernatural. It is astonishing how little this is perceived by even the most eminent opponents of Christian faith on this subject. If ever there was an intelligent man it was Huxley; if ever there was a cultured man it was Matthew Arnold. Yet the test case of the supernatural which the former desiderated was

a centaur trotting about, while the latter's example would be his pen turned into a pen-wiper. It is a cheap thing to speak disrespectfully of distinguished men, and I hope not to fall into the way of doing it; but I shall take leave to say of these suggestions that they stand as a signal illustration of how even the most intelligent men are capable of lapsing at times into unintelligence. The Christian supernatural has nothing to do with silliness of this kind. It is God Himself showing—as is not shown on the plane of nature—that He personally shares my life and saves me from my sin. The thought may be unestablished or untrue; but it is at least great enough not to be classed with the performances of a glorified circus or with conjuring tricks with pens.

The question before us is now sufficiently clear. It is this, whether there is ground for the faith that God, who is the Author of all nature but who there manifests Himself only on impersonal lines, has, in a way consistent with His reason and worthy of Himself, also and further manifested Himself as the Father

of souls which seek to know Him and the Saviour of lives which are enslaved in sin. If we do not find an adequate and assured answer to this question in the facts of nature and human nature, we may now turn to test the reality of that answer to it which is proposed to us in the fact of Jesus Christ.

In the first place, it will be well to make clear to our minds what kind of test of reality we desiderate and should find sufficient. Well, real facts are of two kinds. There is such a thing as objective reality. The subtleties of philosophy can, of course, refine it away and show us that everything objective may be a deception; but, speaking practically, we all recognise such a thing as the reality of, say, a historical event. The battle of Waterloo, for example, really happened, and nothing can alter its reality as a fact. But there is another kind of reality, very different from the other, yet most essential and conclusive. This is the reality of experience. We do not say of love or happiness or hope or fear within us that it happens as the battle of Waterloo happened,

and yet these are real facts which we know and of which we are sure. These then are the two kinds of reality within our cognisance. Now neither alone is quite perfect as knowledge of reality; for objective history may be inaccurately recorded for us, and subjective experience may be merely temperamental. But an exceptional degree of certainty in the test of reality is reached when these two—the historical or objective and the experimental or subjective—corroborate each other and interlock. A man who not only reads of a battle but has been through it, a woman who not only 'feels happy' in her husband's love but has the tangible tokens of it every day in her life—these persons have the fullest possible certainty of the reality of these things. Now it is exactly this kind of certainty which I wish to apply as the test of the reality of the fact of Jesus Christ. No less security is sufficient for an issue so great as the truth of the gospel.

First, then, let us take what I shall call the plain print of history.

To many the page of history on which the

name of Jesus Christ is written may seem to be anything but plain print. Indeed, in our day, there are those—such as Professor Drews in his *Die Christusmythe* and Mr. J. M. Robertson in his *Christianity and Mythology* —who tell us it is a blank page, for Jesus never existed at all. I really cannot here turn aside to discuss this perverse and incoherent *reductio ad absurdum* of criticism. It must suffice to say, in a word, that it is more than nineteen centuries too late to be true. If it were true, the opponents of Christian faith in the first century, who must have known that Jesus was but the name of a myth, would have met the new religion with something far more conclusive than disputing whether it was true that He rose or arguing that it is inconceivable to think of a divine being suffering. They could have exploded the whole thing if Jesus never rose because He never died, and never died because He never lived, and there was no Jesus either to die or rise. This mythical idea is really a fooling with history; and I pass from it by quoting the verdict of an unequalled

authority on the subject of religious mythology, Dr. J. G. Frazer, that it would be just as reasonable to question the historic existence of Alexander the Great or Charlemagne.[1] Still, this extravagance apart, that there is to-day a real and pressing problem with regard to the page of print with which we are dealing is indisputable. Criticism is continually deciphering it, and seems to find the text often corrupt and almost illegible. A celebrated scholar—Dr. Schmiedel—leaves us with some ten lines[2] upon which to build a life of Jesus. It is this critical uncertainty which invites so many persons to-day to find a Christianity independent of the historical Jesus. It befogs and bewilders many a mind to-day that used to read securely about Christ in the gospels, and causes it to say: 'They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.' I have known persons who read the gospels through, as it were for the last time, feeling that henceforth they could never be sure that the Jesus therein

[1] *Attis, Adonis, Osiris* (*The Golden Bough,* pt. iv.), p. 202, n.
[2] *Encyclopædia Biblica,* art. 'Gospels,' § 139.

described is really true. This difficulty and danger are far too real to be evaded, in the pulpit or anywhere else. There is no use pretending that criticism has not profoundly altered our attitude to the evangelical narrative (as to the Bible generally), and it is not possible for the educated modern reader, at all conversant with critical methods and results, to take it as the uncritical believing mind used to do. And it is affectation and worse to deny that many perturbing questions thus are forced upon the honest mind. But it is an entire mistake to conclude that, because of all this, what it is essential for us to know about the Jesus of history in order to read the gospel in Him is therefore lost in haze. Jesus Himself is that gospel. The essential thing is that we have sure knowledge of Him. It is not essential—essential, I mean, for the assurance that here is God's word of personal love and salvation for men—that we must have sure and indisputable knowledge of everything about Him. I repeat it: Jesus *Himself* as reality is what we need to know. And it is this which

in the gospels has an even historical reality which is indisputable and indestructible. But this must be said more distinctly and justified.

What, then, more distinctly is meant by speaking of Jesus 'Himself' as essential, and distinguishing from this 'everything about Him'? I think we can answer if we look at our own selves. What is my self, as distinquishable from the special incidents of my life? We do not seek here, in reply to this question, any philosophical definition; we wish to know where this self is to be found. Well, a man's self is found in his relations to things, and more specifically in these three vital relationships: to God, to his own consciousness, and to others and the world. The incidents of his life express the man's self in these three relations, which are the lines along which his self comes into actual being. To know Jesus 'Himself,' therefore, is not to construct Christological formulas about His Person; it is to inquire what, as a matter of historical fact, was His relation to God, what His self-consciousness, and what His attitude towards man.

Now it is Jesus in these vital relations of life who is indisputable and indestructible.

I surely do not need to attempt once more to do what has been done in innumerable ways by students of the Person of Jesus Christ—namely, set forth what the Figure in the gospels is in these respects. The fewest possible words must suffice here. First, then, as regards His relation to God, we find one whose filial consciousness towards Him was absolutely unbroken and perfect, who never needed even once, as the saintliest among us need continually, to return to the Father by the road of repentance and reformation, and who, further, knew the things of God, not spelling them out from below in much dimness and doubt, and making many mistakes, as the wisest of us do, but as one speaking from the region where these are seen and sure, and announcing them with an authority which is final as the law of God itself. Then, as regards what we call the self-consciousness of Jesus, we find one who had nothing of that dualism between the ideal and the actual—'*les deux hommes en moi*'—

which is the very first datum within our moral consciousness (and, according to the experience of all the saints, it is those who live nearest God who feel this dualism most and confess their failure and sin because of it); and one, moreover, who, without any sense either of presumption or incongruity, regarded Himself and offered Himself as one in whom all humanity's spiritual needs could be met. Lastly, as regards Jesus' relation to others, we find one who took up an attitude which no one of us has the right to take up towards any fellow-man—calling for a surrender of the very self to Him, claiming to be the final judge of their lives as of their destinies, and, above all, not merely preaching to them about the forgiveness of God, but Himself, most personally, forgiving their sins, so that, most naturally, the onlookers called it blasphemy. This—stated in the baldest possible terms—is what the Jesus of the gospels was in His relation to God, in His own self-consciousness, in His attitude to men. It is not single incidents or sayings which exhibit this; it is the whole picture.

But, it is asked, is the picture authentic? I desire to answer this question distinctly and unevasively. Upon the *mare magnum* of the purely critical discussion of the New Testament documents I cannot be expected here to embark; but the general argument I shall adduce is sufficient, if it be valid, to meet the *crux* of the question.

The answer of negative criticism to what has just been said about Jesus is that all this is to be accounted for as a later development of the thought of the Christian community, which, persuaded that Jesus was the Messiah and anxious to promote that conviction, more and more exaggerated the accounts of His life and personality to suit the case, and so, as a noteworthy English writer puts it, 'the testimony even of eye-witnesses rose unconsciously to meet the high demand for a fit account of the Messiah's work.'[1] Now a good deal might be fairly said upon this on strictly critical grounds—that, for example, it takes time and could hardly be done with success immediately

[1] J. Estlin Carpenter's *First Three Gospels*, p. 83.

upon Christ's death and in face of those who knew Him in life, and yet that this picture is not a portrait of later as distinguished from the earlier and primitive tradition.[1] But, not to enter upon any discussion as to this (which would necessarily be a detailed discussion), I shall rather submit the impossibility involved in such a theory as that just indicated—an impossibility which is at once more intelligible and more final than any merely critical objection.

In the first place, let it be admitted that this kind of thing—this exaggeration of the portrait under the stimulus of a desire to prove Jesus to have been the Messiah—could be done in the reporting of various details of His life. It is clearly possible, in some such personal or doctrinal party-interest, to work up an incident into a miracle and to make a story fit nicely

[1] Dr. Denney's *Jesus and the Gospel* is an exhaustive and really conclusive argument for the last statement. What is said of Jesus in the text above is practically all contained within Professor Flinders Petrie's 'Nucleus' of the primitive record, and the essentials of it are in the early speeches in the Book of Acts, which even Dr. Schmiedel says give a picture that 'must have come from a primitive source.'

into a prophecy. But, as has already been indicated, the challenging thing about Jesus Christ is not this or that detail in the gospels, but is the whole personality in and behind all incidents aand stories. It is a personality—a character, a consciousness—than which I venture to say there is nothing in the whole range of literature less like the invention of men. After all, we know pretty well by this time what the human mind, even in men of great genius, can create in literature; and when we compare these figures with the Figure in the gospel, the *mot juste* is Rousseau's—*Ce n'est pas ainsi qu'on invente.* When critics in this enlightened and educated and cultured twentieth-century England tell us this incomparable character and consciousness—the 'divinity' of which, not in the dogmatic or ecclesiastical sense but in the moral and spiritual sense, has impressed itself on the noblest thought of the world for two thousand years and is undimmed to-day—were originally created and then consistently carried through by some obscure Jewish pamphleteers of the second century in

the party-interest of an ecclesiastical propaganda, I am inclined to make reply thus: 'And shall we—we "who speak the tongue that Shakespere spoke" [here I should certainly work in Shakespere for all he is worth]—shall we be put to shame by Jewish second-century pamphleteers? Let us do it. You, then, do it, or something like it. Create—and, at some length, fill in—the portrait of a man who lives in perfect unison with God, who often talks to others about their bad self but is never conscious of his own, and who, with no sense of impropriety, claims absolute dominion over men's life, judges their souls, and takes it on Him to forgive their sins. *You* do it, I say—as these second-century Jewish fellows did—and get the world to call it divine; thus will you at once glorify our literature, immortalise your names, and prove the case.' This is said in the form of a jest, and perhaps one should apologise for assuming, even momentarily, a jesting tone on such a question. But it is said seriously too. The truth is that, far from being able to produce such a personality as Jesus

Christ in the original, the finest minds feel how unable they are ever to reproduce Him. Why will an adequate life of Jesus never be written? Why, if not because, as Matthew Arnold said, 'we cannot explain Him, cannot get behind Him and above Him, cannot command Him'?[1] We do not speak thus even of Shakespere's characters; and assuredly the last man to speak thus of the literary creation of second-century Jews was Matthew Arnold. No, verily—and to sum it all up—various are the relationships men may hold towards Jesus Christ, but one they cannot hold. They may be His opponents or His disciples; they may be critics or worshippers; they may be doubters or believers. But they cannot—never could and never can—be His creators.

It is impossible, without unduly extending this chapter, to develop this argument further here. It is not, let me say, the argument of orthodoxy; no one has stated it more explicitly than John Stuart Mill, who declares 'it is no use to say that Christ as exhibited in the gospels

[1] *Literature and Dogma* (Preface to Popular Edition).

is not historical,' for, while 'the tradition of His followers suffices to insert any number of marvels' and suchlike, who, either of His disciples or of the early Christian writers, 'was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus or of imagining the life and character revealed in the gospels'?[1] It is the argument neither of orthodoxy nor of heterodoxy; it is the argument of plain critical reason. Let the reader, who would pursue and test it further, take the gospels in his hand and read them with the mind and conscience which are ready to recognise and receive spiritual life and truth. He will find many incidents which, frankly, he hardly knows what to do with. But he will find also, as Dr. Denney has put it, 'there is a person before his eyes in the gospels whose spiritual reality (to express it thus) is so indisputable that it carries his historical reality along with it.'[2] He may say that the evangelists may have made this or that story about

[1] *Three Essays on Religion: Theism*, v. The whole passage should be read.

[2] *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 167.

Jesus; he will not say they made Jesus Himself, whom it is as far beyond the most enthusiastic belief to have created as it is beyond the most critical unbelief to destroy.

Here we have already touched our second line of witness to the reality of Christ—that of experience—and to this I now pass.

There is more need to be critical about the script of experience than even the print of history. It is so easy here to talk largely and loosely, to be unscientific and inaccurate, to make experience say more than, as a matter of fact, it can say. We must criticise our experience if it is to teach us safely. This is the case with even human emotions; the best and most interpretative love-poetry, for example, is not that of mere youthful sentimentalists, but is given us by those who—not coldly, indeed, but truly—read what their passion means. And certainly it is the case with religious experience. If then we are going to call in this witness to corroborate the testimony to the reality of Christ, let us not give the rein to vague emotions and impressions, but keep

strictly to what, in a real and sure sense, are facts of moral and spiritual experience.

It is obvious, to begin with, that experience cannot be asked to corroborate the mere external incidents of the life of Christ; but we have seen that the essential thing for us is not this or that incident but is Jesus Himself. Even as regards Jesus Himself, however, it is obvious that our experience cannot witness to everything; we cannot, for example, reproduce within our consciousness that unique self-consciousness which is depicted, with such convincing historic reality, in the gospels. The crucial aspect of the personality of Jesus which may be tested in our experience is His relation to man. What, then, we must ask, is Jesus—this historical Jesus of the gospels—to us in the experience of mind and heart and conscience and life? To this question I believe and submit that experience gives an answer which is clear and indisputable.

When our minds and hearts and consciences and lives directly and honestly face Jesus Christ —the historical Jesus Christ, I say again, of

the gospels—what we are met with may, I think, be characterised thus: it is a *call,* leading when obeyed into a *companionship,* and this, in turn, the source of a new *life.* Other words may, of course, be used to describe this, but that these are real elements in the experience of a man really turned towards Christ and faithfully trying to be true to Him can hardly, I think, be questioned. Now, what is it which is the crucial characteristic of the experience of this call, companionship, and life? In order to answer this we need not make claim to be profoundly experienced Christians. The thing I am going to name will be recognised as true even by those of us whose obedience to the call, faithfulness to the fellowship, and realisation of the life lived with Christ are of the poorest. But the one thing we do know about this relationship to Him, if we know anything about it at all, is this, that this call of, companionship with, and power from Christ are simply identical with the call, companionship, and power of God Himself. This is really the most clear and indisputable thing in any Chris-

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tian man's relationship with Christ. He makes and can make no kind of distinction within his experience between 'knowing God' and 'knowing Him whom He hath sent'—that is, Jesus Christ. Indeed, as Dr. Harnack puts it, 'every relationship to God'—that is, of course, in the things of the gospel—'is at the same time a relationship to Jesus Christ.'[1] In all this I do not mean anything dogmatic—any doctrine of God and Christ. I am speaking solely of what is found fact in experience; and nothing in Christian experience is so clearly or really fact as this, that to hear Christ's call is to hear God, to know Christ's companionship is to have fellowship with God, to live life under the influence of Christ is to live it with God. If Christianity means anything at all in the soul, it means this. As this is the most surely attested, so is it also the most widely attested fact in what we call Christian experience. The Christian beginner at least recognises that his response to Christ has been just his response to God; while the most experienced saint never

[1] *Dogmengeschichte,* iii. 69.

finds that he gets past this relationship to Christ to another and deeper relationship with God beyond. Here, then, is a fact of life about Jesus Christ which we can take as solid and can verify as sure.

Let us now place together the central and indestructible thing in the history and this crucial and indisputable thing in our experience.

Do they not indeed *interlock?* There, in history, is One whose personality is assuredly not that merely of one man of the world's population—One, in particular, whose relationship to man was that which no man can take to another, but is indeed the relationship which only God can assume to any of us. And here, in our moral and spiritual experience—no vague emotion in it but its surest fact—is the same person meaning for us not simply one more of the world's population or even a great teacher of long ago, but what only God Himself can mean and be. Let us, for the present, disregard any kind of theological synthesis of all this. Let us look solely and simply at the facts—the two facts which come to be one fact,

for each is the complement and corroboration of the other. Do they not, I ask again, interlock? If so, the fact of Christ has surely the highest possible kind of reality, and the search of our faith for a sure word which should mean God personally speaking to us, caring for us, saving us has been not in vain.

At the risk of reiteration, let me still further emphasise this combination of both these elements as that which makes faith fast. We are constantly being told that history is unnecessary and irrelevant here, and also that the two together—the historical and the experiential—are incongruous and incompatible. I shall say a word on each of these contentions. The former takes high philosophical ground. 'Accidental truths of history,' it declares in oft-quoted words of Lessing, 'can never be proof of necessary truths of reason.' My answer is very simple. I am not seeking any necessary truth of reason. I want to know this—whether or not God personally speaks to me lovingly and savingly. It is quite consistent with eternal reason that He does not. But if He does—

let this be clear—it will be shown, not in some category of Divine Immanence, for immanence conceals rather than reveals character, but by individual deeds done in life even as a man's character is thus revealed. It is not in a philosophy of ideas necessarily true in reason, but by seeing what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, who lived in the theatre of this world, that we shall ever find the *data* for the gospel of God's personal love which we seek. The other contention—that the historical and the experiential in faith are incongruous and incompatible—raises a question of simple fact. The antithesis between these is statable on paper; but it simply is not a fact in the Christian life. On the contrary, it is just as we deal in mind and conscience with the historic person of the evangelical records that our religious experience of the knowledge of God and communion with Him grows rich and strong and meaningful and sure; and, correspondingly, these experiences are delivered from that fatal subjectivity of which I have already spoken in an earlier page of this chapter, only when

they are experiences which Christ creates and countenances. To put this in theological terminology, Jesus Christ (the historical) gives to us His Spirit (the experiential); and, on the other hand, the Spirit speaks not of Himself, but takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us. The alleged incompatibility is simply not a fact, and any merely logical statement of it *solvitur ambulando*. Further, when it is maintained that these two elements—the historical and the spiritual—are of different worlds and move in different orbits, I reply that Jesus Christ, who is the gospel, is of both these worlds and in both these orbits. He is a fact of history as fully as Julius Cæsar is. He is a spiritual fact as really as human love is. The Christian gospel, then, is neither a mere history, for that would make it a tradition, and tradition cannot save, nor a mere experience, for that would make it subjective, and what is subjective is never secure; it is both. The two, I repeat, interlock. They countersign each other's witness. And this is the unique test of the reality of the faith of the gospel.

'That which God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.'[1]

This chapter must not be much longer extended, but, having said so much as has been said as to the reality of this fact of Christ as a fact more than anything in nature or human nature, we must, at least briefly, recognise what is involved in this both intellectually and religiously.

That the intellectual consequences of such a faith are deep and far-reaching is evident. A Christ who thus transcends nature and human nature means not less than that the boundaries

[1] I may add in a note that here is an illustration of two things which have often struck my mind about many questions. One is the danger of false antithesis in reasoning, where we are told to accept one or other of two categories when truth is found by holding on to both. False antithesis and loose terminology are the two greatest pitfalls of the mind. The other thing rises out of this, and is that in a number of questions the truth lies in a balance of apparent contraries. To use a mathematical figure, it is an ellipse with two foci, rather than a circle with one centre. In many subjects I feel with Joubert when he said he 'liked to see two truths at once.' This applies to conduct also, where it is not enough to have a principle and run amok with it, but where (as Principal Rainy once phrased it) 'you must let one principle play upon another.' A dissertation might be written on 'The Equipoise of Truth,' but this is not the place to attempt it.

of cognisable reality in the world and in history are enlarged; and this means a revised estimate both of nature and history. Now here I simply decline to get into a discussion of the possibility of 'miracle.' Really, I do not know exactly what a miracle is, and have never read a definition which was much better than a begging of the question from one side or the other. But I think I know what a fact is. And if anything is a fact—indelible in history and indisputable in life—it is that in Jesus Christ is that which is not either in nature or human nature. Instead of discussing the supernatural *a priori,* what we have to do is to make room in our mind for that fact. On this I wish to make two remarks. On the one hand, it is not to be misstated; on the other, it is not to be minimised or evaded. It is misstated when it is represented as meaning the destruction of the idea of the unity of the order of the world. The unity of the order of the world was a Christian thought long before it was articulated by science. Never did it find more explicit assertion than in these words: 'All things were

made by Him; and apart from Him not a thing was made that has been made.'[1] What this fact of Christ, as more than nature, does mean is that the category of unity is not what we call 'natural law,' but is that living and loving God who is in Him. But it is even more incumbent to say this fact of Christ must not be minimised or evaded, and on this I wish to speak more particularly.

If you say you accept the reality of this Christ, then you must take the intellectual consequences of saying so unevasively. It is neither fair nor frank to say it in one sense and unsay it in another. Yet there is nothing commoner in a great deal of modern literature on Jesus Christ than this very speaking with two voices. As an example of this I take an eminent name, and one of a man we all regard with admiration and indebtedness. On this question Dr. Harnack distinguishes in a most curious way between what may be accepted as a fact in history and what must be received as a fact in religion. 'The historian,' he says,

[1] *St. John* i. 6.

'cannot regard the supernatural as a sure historical event;' for, the writer continues, 'by doing so he is destroying the very method of interpreting things upon which all historical investigation depends.' This seems quite clear and final; 'but'—and it is a most notable *aber*—Dr. Harnack immediately goes on, if this same historian be convinced that Jesus did what is 'in the strict sense miraculous,' he 'infers' from this 'a supernatural person,' which inference, however, 'belongs to the province of religious faith.'[1] Now I pass over comment on this reference to historical 'method' with the single observation that the 'only method' upon which any historical investigation has any right to depend is to be open to recognise whatever can establish a case to be recognised as a fact; and surely I am speaking within reason and with studied moderation when I say that Jesus Christ as a fact not to be accounted for in terms of nature has, after twenty centuries of scrutiny, a case not to be peremptorily non-

[1] *Dogmengeschichte,* ii. 50 n. (E. T., *History of Dogma,* i. 65 n.).

suited at the bar of history by any 'method.' But, passing from that, I wish to ask if this separation between what a man *qua* historian must deny and *qua* believer may infer is tenable. Man is not an intellectual amphibian. He has only one mind, and he lives in one world of truth; it is not possible to split either the mind or the world into two parts, each with its own allegiance. I venture to put this, with entire respect, more personally. Dr. Harnack, a prominent and influential teacher, is asked whether the supernatural personality of Jesus Christ is a credible fact. He answers—I do not think this is unfair or caricature—that first he must know whether he is to reply in the capacity of historian or that of a man of religious faith. Surely we may retort that we desire Dr. Adolf Harnack to reply, and we were not aware there is more than one Dr. Harnack. Some men have greater minds than the rest of us, but they have not more minds. And thus, I conclude, if we are going to accept at all the reality of this Christ of whom we have been speaking, we must do it with our

one mind and with the whole of it, whatever be the intellectual consequences.

But it is with the consequences of Jesus Christ for religion that here we are more concerned. It means such a faith as that which we found such problems as suffering and sin forced us to seek—a faith in God as personally loving and saving us and indeed *our* God and our Father. 'He that hath seen me,' said Jesus, 'hath seen the Father; how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?' Is this then the answer to that profound cry of the human soul that stretches past the impersonal laws and processes of nature for the living God and cries: 'O that I might find *Him*'? There are many minds which so unquestioningly accept Christian faith that they have never doubted this answer is entirely true; there are others which are so confirmedly agnostic that they have never given it even a moment's credence. There is a certain want of realisation of the issue at stake in both of these attitudes of mind. I think it is when a man realises what it means *not* to believe thus about God that he is driven again

to Christ with the words: 'Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief;' and, on the other hand, it is when he in some degree realises what a stupendous thing it is to think of God as thus loving and saving him that it seems really impossible to be true, and he is thrown back again into doubt. I do not understand either a satisfied unbelief or a facile faith.

Let us, then as a poet who knew both unbelief and faith[1] bids us, 'consider it again.' Is it surely true—this gospel, familiarity with the sound of which has dulled our minds to the magnitude of its amazingness? We know, of course, that many noble teachers have preached to men the love of God. In particular, Jesus did so. But if these were just human opinions, and if even Jesus was no more than a pure-minded and guileless Galilean peasant who has been dead now these many hundred years—such a 'faithful, tormented, questioning, battling man' who 'died with broken hopes,' as that of Gustav Frenssen's popular story[2]—

[1] A. H. Clough.

[2] *The Story of Jesus: Retold by a Modern Disciple.* Translated from the German of G. Frenssen by Dr. Archibald Duff.

why shall I build my faith on their ideas when there is nothing to show of fact which may be guarantee that what they say corresponds with reality? Speaking is easy work—even speaking about the love of God. It is *data* that the gospel needs. If then there be no such basis of fact for this gospel, let us not talk as if there were. To ask me to believe it from these lofty teachers, without any *data,* is futile; the facts against it are too strong. We need not become aggressive unbelievers, but let us be quiet at least. We must probably give up many fine thoughts and fond hopes—not, certainly, all fine thoughts about life or fond hopes, but the deepest of them and the dearest —and we may as well give up, except in the sense of soliloquy, our prayers. The world becomes chillier, darker, emptier. But we must just live a little in it and love a little in it and work a little in it and then die out of it as every one else has to do. So do we, at times, tell ourselves that, if there be no assured gospel of a Father's love, it does not matter so much, and we can get on well enough with an agnostic

mind and a stoic heart. But this mood is a mask which may at any moment fall off. 'Just when we 're safest' (as Browning says in lines too familiar for quotation) something wakens, now a hope and now a fear, which makes us feel that it matters even infinitely whether there be not more to be said of the great mysteries of God and the soul, of sin and salvation, of life and death, than the stars and the hills and the seas can ever say or even than we can say to ourselves in our dim-lit minds and defiled hearts. We stretch once more the hand and strain the ear. It is in vain:—

'Dextrae jungere dextram
Non datur, ac veras audire et reddere voces.'[1]

Why, then, may not Christ, offered as 'the Word of God,' be accepted as the word we seek and need? Because, it is replied, what is supernatural is inadmissible. Well, as a theorem, as an abstract idea in a conception of the world, the supernatural may well seem in-

[1] Virgil's *Æneid,* i. 408. ('To clasp hand with hand is not given, nor to hear or utter reliable speech.')

admissible. But this gospel comes to us here not as a bare abstract theorem; it comes in a person. Look, then, straight into the eyes of Jesus Christ. Examine Him, with an earnest and a fair mind, in history; face Him, with an awakened and frank conscience, in moral and spiritual life. What the result may be for any other is not for me to say, but I will say what for me is the result. *It*—a theorem about a divine, supernatural word—is incredible; *it* is too remote from reality to be convincing or even interesting, and is far too unlikely to be true. But *He* is indisputable; *He* is too real to be denied and far 'too good' not 'to be true.'

I ended the last chapter with an angels' chorus. We may be very unfit to join in that. But we may—indeed, must we not?—join in the confession of those first disciples, men on earth like ourselves, who said to Jesus: 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.'

V

THE CLAIM OF HUMANISM

'There are two happinesses, that of nature and that of conquest—two equilibria, that of Greece and that of Nazareth—two kingdoms, that of the natural man and that of the regenerate man.'

HENRI-FREDERIC AMIEL.

CHAPTER V

THE CLAIM OF HUMANISM

THE topic discussed in the last chapter is the crucial question about Jesus Christ, and yet it does not end the challenge which life presents to faith. We must now go on to consider the facts of life, or some typical aspects of them, with a further question in our minds—the question, namely, of whether the view of things expressed in what we associate with Jesus Christ is sufficient and adequate for life, or whether other points of view are not larger and richer. I shall, in this chapter, consider this in the light of what may be called the *positive* of human life—the claim of humanism to be the real and rich way of living; in the chapter following we must consider the *negative* side.

What is meant by the former of these issues may be stated thus. Let it be admitted that much of what has been said about Christ is or

may be true. Let it be admitted that He is, in a very real sense, a supreme and even supernatural Figure, and also that He is truly the source of an immediate knowledge of and communion with God. Still—here is the question now before us—is not this, after all, but one element in life? Is not human experience in this great and interesting world a far broader and more manifold thing than is covered by this internal colloquy between Jesus Christ and the soul about repentance and forgiveness and the like? Can you then put life under the single domination of even this Master and under the one law even of His authority? In short—and even where it is admitted that Jesus Christ is, in a real sense, true for religion—is He and is His gospel *adequate* for all that this wonderful life of ours contains, and especially for its great human aspects which give to it so much of its interest and richness and sweetness and, despite all its sorrows, joy?

These questions of to-day are not in themselves new, but they are finding new and very

distinct expressions in our age. The modern mind has not only a larger conception of the physical universe than was known in the times when the gospel was first preached, but also a larger sense of human life than at least the Jews of those days knew. And its motto certainly is *im Ganzen*—whether or not always *im Guten* or *im Schönen—resolut zu leben.* It is ready and waiting to say 'Yes' to life. Now it is easy to perceive how impatient a mood like this becomes to anything which is of the nature of a cordon round any part of life, or seems to lay any limiting law upon ideas and aims in life which it is formulating for itself. And it is just this which much in the mind of to-day finds in religion and not least in Christianity. Thus arises a new challenge to the standards and sanctions of an older view of life. No one has appreciated this phase of modern feeling better than Dr. Eucken, and I shall quote one of his many statements of it:—

> 'In its rich unfolding of life, the modern world has brought an untold wealth of things new and

> great whose influence no one can escape and whose fruits we all enjoy. But with this incontestable gain there is closely interwoven a characteristic tendency which is deeply involved in doubt and conflict. Since the beginning of the seventeenth century, the modern world has wrought out a new type of life, which departs widely from the Christian. . . . The greater the strength and self-consciousness which this new type acquires, the more evident it becomes that it is incompatible with Christianity; in fact, the fundamental tendencies of the two run directly counter to each other. Their peaceable and friendly co-operation, such as existed in earlier times, becomes impossible; a clear understanding is increasingly necessary; continually harsher is the rejection of Christianity by those who follow the specifically modern tendency.'[1]

Thus is it that we have in the present day non-Christian ideals of life held up to us which not only do not accept the Christian ideal but vigorously oppose it as—to use a phrase of Eucken's in some other place—'the enemy of the energy and truth of life.' These last words express a feeling towards the law and gospel of Christ which to-day finds many forms of expression and which demands examination.

[1] *The Problem of Human Life*, p. 297.

Probably the two most notable exponents of this are Nietzsche and George Bernard Shaw. The former has rightly seen that the only way finally to 'smash' Christianity is to dethrone its ethical ideal. 'So long as men go on admiring Jesus and making Him their ideal, no good will come from disproving the gospel history.'[1] So Nietzsche preaches a 'noble morality' which exults in a spirit the reverse of that of Christ, and declares humility and sacrifice to be the principles only of the weaklings of humanity.[2] Nearer home, Mr. Shaw holds forth a gospel of freedom through the rejection of all kinds of moral sanctions or restraints, whether they be Christian or any other, and the refusal to allow any consideration of ethical differentiation to stand in the way of whatever impulse is able to command. From this freedom many people would turn back when they see how it works out in life; but not so Mr. Shaw, who writes:—

> 'If a young woman, in a mood of strong reaction against the preaching of duty or self-sacrifice and

[1] Figgis's *Civilisation at the Cross-Roads*, p. 59.

[2] I shall refer to Nietzsche's 'noble morality' in the closing chapter.

> the rest of it, were to tell me that she was determined not to murder her own instincts and throw away her life in obedience to a mouthful of empty phrases, I should say to her: "By all means, do as you propose. Try how wicked you can be. It is precisely the same experiment as trying how good you can be." '[1]

These instances (on the latter of which I shall say a few words later in this chapter) may be extreme. But their point of view is deep in the mind of the modern man, and I am inclined to think even deeper in the mind of the modern woman—the view, namely, that there are regions in life which are a law to themselves, and in which any other authority, even in the name of religion or of Christ Himself, is (to use again Eucken's phrase) 'an enemy to the energy and truth of life.' Do not many persons—neither Nietzscheans nor Shavians, but morally clothed and rationally in their right mind—feel something of this in relation, for example, to art or to science? These are realms where the whole interest of the gospel seems not so much

[1] *The Sanity of Art*, p. 44.

untrue as irrelevant. If a man will put this to the test he may be surprised to find how far it will lead him. Let him, to name one case, really steep his soul in the beauty and the passion that are in Greek literature—and if we are going to claim an autonomy from even Christian authority for certain spheres of life, let it be done for the sake of the balanced and serene spirit that breathes and burns in Sophocles or Sappho rather than at the instance of any neurotic and noisy moderns—and he will find himself in a world where the questions and calls of the gospel simply lose interest and almost meaning. Nor is it only in connection with such matters of the higher intellectual life, as art or science, that this autonomy asserts itself. It is not less strong in the emotional life. Thus do not many persons—though they may defend their minds from formulating it—feel in the same way about human love, which comes, when it does come, as an absolute which is its own lord? It is not always easy to reconcile with thoughts such as these the supremacy and sufficiency of the gospel which would crown

Christ as the law of life and 'Lord of all.' The result of this, even when it does not go the length of positively anti-Christian assertions of moral independence of the principles of the gospel, is, as I have already indicated, a feeling that there is a larger life to be lived than the Christian, and that the wise man will be (to use Mr. Edmund Gosse's phrase about Walter Pater) 'not all for Apollo nor all for Christ.'[1] Here is a far more insidious question for faith than anything said by a blatant materialism. The suggestion finds perfect expression in a sentence or two from the pen of one of the most refinedly sceptical minds in contemporary European literature. In one of M. Anatole France's books a convert to the Christian life says of her spiritual instructor that she believes him *'car il possède la vérité.'* To which Nicias, the typical cultured second-century Greek, smilingly replies: *'Et moi, je possède les vérités. Il n'en a qu'une; je les ai toutes. Je suis plus riche que lui.'*[2] This is a thought

[1] *Critical Kitcats,* by E. Gosse, p. 270.
[2] *Thais,* 228.

of life which insinuates itself deep into the mind of to-day—the thought of life as something larger, richer, more manifold than the Christian view of it. Here is something we must adjust to the claim of Him we call Master and 'Lord of all.'

It is obvious that the ascetic solution, which is the official answer of a large section of Christendom, does not meet the case. Apart altogether from its being really not true to the spirit of Jesus Christ, who came eating and drinking, or to the practice of the apostles who, amid the splendid sacrifices they made for the gospel, did not proscribe or renounce the world of human life, it is plain that if the ascetic principle were completely and universally applied it would result not in the salvation but merely in the suicide of the race.[1] Asceticism may be justified in certain individuals or even

[1] The Roman Catholic way of escape from this is by dividing Christian life into two grades—the higher saintly rule of asceticism (including abstinence from marriage), which is the 'religious' life, and a lower 'secular' Christian life which is 'sufficient' for those in the world. This is an utterly non-Christian distinction, alien to the whole New Testament, which knows no distinction between a saint and a Christian.

periods, and it reminds the world that Christ demands surrender and sacrifice, but it is not in itself either a possible or a Christian general principle of life. On the other hand, it must be said that the modern treatment of this question is apt to be slight and easy, and often amounts to little more than the making of Jesus Christ a kind of Honorary President of art and letters and romance and other humane interests. This is but to play with the problem. Jesus Christ is nothing if He be not the Lord. His is not faintly to colour things with a Christian or semi-Christian tinge; His is to command—to be the supreme and final authority. 'Where He comes,' as a hymn puts it, 'He comes to reign.' To speak of another Christ than this is indeed not so much to play with as rather to insult the gospel. The problem is to relate *this* Christ—the Lord—to the varied humanistic aspects of life which so loudly assert their own autonomy and which, it must be admitted, are not easily annexed to the gospel. It is a problem to be dealt with certainly in a broader spirit than that which relegates God's

beautiful world and the human nature God has given us to the territory of the Evil One; but not less certainly must it be dealt with in a more unmistakably and distinctively Christian way than that which assigns to Jesus Christ in any region of life a merely complimentary position.

The few examples already given of the question before us divide into two classes, and these are entitled to be distinguished and separately discussed. The claim for an extra-Christian autonomy for individual and subjective ends such as love or freedom (in the personal sense) or happiness is one thing; another is when that is claimed for such general objective ends as artistic beauty or scientific truth. I shall consider first the one and then the other of these; in both cases let us try to deal with the matter not as an academic argument about an abstraction called life, but as it is proved in living experience.

When we look in this way at cases of the former class the answer is not far to seek, for life itself supplies it with unmistakable clearness. Nothing is in life more certain than this,

that for the individual to reject all Christian or other authority in order to give such things as happiness or freedom or love their uncontrolled and absolute autonomy is the direct and certain road to failure and disaster. I propose to look at this more particularly in connection with the last named—a topic on which it is easy to write foolishly and falsely, but a thing of profound influence in human lives and perhaps the best illustration for our discussion.

Love—the word being used here in its popular sense—is the theme of much literature, including nearly all novels. Well, if we read almost any batch of representative modern novels—not excluding even morally unprofitable ones, if they are true—which deal powerfully and seriously with the story of lives which have made this an absolute directing law of conduct, what do we find? I think we find that hardly a book of genuine authority and convincingness does not in the end make this lead to disaster. That disaster, be it noted, may not be always an immediate unhappiness. But it will mean—as so surely it does in life—a

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soul that dwindles away from nobleness and gets smaller and meaner with the years. This is the moral not only of one kind of writer or one type of character but of all really worth counting. It is the moral of the career of a distinguished being like Anna Karénina as much as—I apologise to her most humbly for placing her even for a moment in such low company—that of any of Mr. Hitchen's degenerates. Now it is certainly no theological or moral orthodoxy which makes such books end thus. It is just life. For life says two main things about this human passion. One is —and let poets and novelists to the end of time celebrate it with all their powers—that here is *Das irdische Glück,* concerning which the heart that knows it says, as of nothing else that is human: 'I have lived.' The other thing is that therefore to isolate this in an autonomy for life and make it a sole law unto itself is inevitably to ruin it. Indeed, love can be itself and its highest only when it is related to and regulated by other parts of the organism of life. Mr. Stephen Phillips in his *Paolo and*

Francesca—by no means a profound treatment of an immortal theme—makes the lover in the climax of his passion say:—

> 'Now all the bonds
> Which held me I cast off—honour, esteem,
> All ties, all friendships, peace and life itself:
> You only in this universe I want.'[1]

A cavalier poet[2] knew something truer than this who wrote what I will call the finest couplet that chivalry ever inspired:—

> 'I could not love thee, dear, so much
> Loved I not honour more.'

If Anna Karénina, with all her intelligence of understanding and all her capacity of feeling and sensitiveness to life, could have but known this too, her bright spirit would not have gone out in the darkness of that tragedy at the railway station in Moscow, which we still read with a pain and horror as if it had happened—as, indeed, did it not?—to a personal friend.

This, then, is a plain fact of life and of the

[1] *Paolo and Francesca,* Act IV.

[2] Richard Lovelace.

best literature about life—that to make such things as those which have been named absolute and autonomous is to defeat and destroy them. And the reason of this fact is also plain, and indeed has been already given. It is that life is an organic unity, and no part of it can be made absolute in it without confusion and contradiction. If we make one thing the whole thing, then the whole will assert itself in reaction. This is precisely what life does to the man or woman who makes individual freedom or happiness or love a thing by itself, separate from life as a whole, and a single and absolute law: life reacts on any one who does that and defeats these very ends. Here, one may take the occasion to remark, is the ruinous untruth in that specious justification for yielding to what is called carnal temptation, which tells people that to do so is only to obey the nature which has been given them. This kind of suggestion—which perhaps few avow but more than a few feel and some find difficult to answer—has its element of truth as all dangerous lies have. Its truth is that these instincts have

their natural basis in the body, which is part—and a most important part—of human nature. But the untruth lies in treating the part as if it were a whole. These instincts are not in human nature by themselves, that they may be allowed to roam and rage and reign as if responsible only to themselves and isolated from the rest of what makes man. The body, therefore, is not to be obeyed when it speaks *alone;* what is to be obeyed is the whole man. And man, while a carnal (the word is used with no theological *animus* but simply in its grammatical sense), is also a rational and moral and social being. If he is to listen to the call of his flesh he must listen to it along with the reason and conscience and also his responsibilities to other persons. Obey yourself certainly; but your whole self. Else, as I have said, life, which is a whole, will react on you to your ruin.

What is the next point for us to examine is now clear. It obviously is to gain some directing idea as to what or where is our real as distinguished from our false or partial self.

Here may come in the comment which I said I would make on the quotation given a few pages back from Mr. Shaw, about a young woman 'determined not to murder her own instincts,' to whom Mr. Shaw has nothing better to say than that by all means she should be as wicked as she can, for it is 'precisely the same experiment' as being as good as one can. Now it would be an unjust and unintelligent criticism to read this as a direct invitation to go—if the colloquialism be pardonable—to the bad. It reads like that, and—what is much worse—many persons will read it thus; and in this respect it is an illustration of how Mr. Shaw, himself a moralist, seems to think it amusing to recommend his message of morality by means of a vocabulary of vice. But the author's point, I take it, is that the girl should get free of all merely external moral constraints and that her morality must be her own. This is not only a true but even a Christian idea, though, I must add, somewhat successfully disguised. Certainly all really moral conduct is from within. But Mr. Shaw seems

to think this is enough, and he stops here. He considers that if conduct be thus inward in its spring and motive, it does not matter about its ethical quality. One man's nature has a passion for goodness: let him be good. Another's has the passion for badness: let him be bad. 'It is precisely the same experiment.' The mere freedom is everything. Now this is in practice to give a general licence to pandemonium, but I do not emphasise that at present. What I want to say of it here is that it is no true theory of life. For life is direction as well as freedom. Without the former, the latter is not only dangerous but meaningless. It is telling a man to drive fast and not telling him where to drive. Humanity is not simply a right to realise yourself but also a right self to be realised. Augustine knew that as Mr. Shaw does not, and the old doctor said a greater and wiser and more complete word than the modern dramatist when he said: '*Dilige et quod vis fac.*' Here is the 'do as you propose' just as in Mr. Shaw; but here is also, and first, the end and object—and, of course, Augustine means that

the love of God and good is the end. This is freedom with direction in it—with meaning in it. Any counsel which omits this is counsel only for beings less than man, for man is a being with an end, a self, which he is to find, create, achieve. Mr. Shaw's counsel might be quite suitable for creatures who have neither ideal nor aspiration, but who are just what they are. Yes, I think I know the kind of creatures he should have addressed his words to—the trolls! In one of Ibsen's plays, these are a tribe of beings that live a semi-brutish life, with gusty passions and capricious impulses; and this life is all their ideal, for they have no wish to live the lives of men. As one of them puts it:—

'Among men the saying goes, "Man, be thyself!"
At home here with us, 'mid the tribe of the trolls,
The saying goes, "Troll, to thyself be—enough."'[1]

'Never mind,' says Mr. Shaw to the young woman, 'about being your true self; "be" to your dominant gust of instinct, whatever it is:

[1] *Peer Gynt*, Act II. sc. vi.

that is enough.' This is mere trollism. It is 'enough' for that tribe; it is not enough for human beings. It is philistine to offer men and women this crudity in the great and sacred name of freedom. But, as I sought to be just to the quotation, I would also not be unjust to the author. It may be that Mr. Shaw needs to be encouraged to think of himself more highly than apparently he does. Let him, then, be assured that he is not without talents which make him entitled to be an instructor of human beings; for it were to be regretted if any one of whom this can be said is satisfied, through any excess of modesty—beautiful to behold as that is in a writer in this age when so many trumpet themselves—with the poor post of being a teacher merely of the tribe of the trolls.

With this word of cheer I leave Mr. Shaw and pass on to our question of what is our true and complete as distinguished from a false self, and I shall say at once what is the main and indeed the only thing I have to say. There is absolutely no one with whom this question can

be considered comparable to Jesus Christ. He is no teacher of the tribe of the trolls. 'In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.' Many and many a calamitous conception of human life has been theirs who have formed their idea of it apart from Him; never, never have regrets gathered in the end in the mind of any one who learned the thought of his true self from Jesus Christ. This is not something generally true of human life at large. It is most personally verifiable and verified in the individual mind and conscience. When any one of us really will bring his life into the presence of Christ, he gets not merely a new thought of God but also, and perhaps more indisputably, a new thought of himself. And this is not only —though frequently it is this to begin with— a realisation of his bad self in a sense of failure and sin; it is also a vision of his truer nature and of what his life should be and is in the worthier thought of it. Jesus Christ is in a marvellous way identical with a man's best self. This is as real a fact of moral experience as it

is a real fact of religious experience, that when we have fellowship with Christ we have fellowship with even God too. What a wonderful Person is this, whom to know is to know God, and to whom to come is to come to one's very self!

Here then we seem to be finding the answer to the question we set out to investigate, of how the great humanities of life, such as happiness and freedom and love, are to be related to Him who is called 'Lord of all.' In a word, the answer is this, these have to be related to this unity of the true self, and this true self finds itself in Christ. How this may work out with such things as those which have been named cannot, of course, be set down in general terms; for human life is nothing if not individual, and Jesus Christ is essentially a teacher and saviour of persons. But certainly it does work out in a way which justifies Christ's own assertion, that He comes not to destroy life but to give it more abundantly. A modern poet, in a remarkable poem, has expressed the fear it will turn out otherwise, and that a self

given to Christ means a negation of the sweet humanities of life:—

> 'Though I knew His love who followed,
> Yet was I sore afraid
> Lest having Him, I must have naught beside.'[1]

But an apostle says all things are ours when we are Christ's. Well, in life it must be tested. Test freedom thus or happiness—on the one hand, the doing whatever we 'propose' and the gratifying indiscriminately of our 'instincts,' or, on the other, 'the faith, which experience will ratify in due time, that our desires are less the ministers than the destroyers of life until they are subdued into glad obedience to His holy and hallowing will.'[2] Take even love and test it thus, and see if this be not true in life—that the more room two hearts make for the loving and following of Jesus Christ, the more room they also make for the deepest and most lasting love of one another. I neither deny nor disguise another side to this—namely, that there are places in life where Christ may mean that some

[1] Francis Thompson, *The Hound of Heaven.*
[2] Hort's *The Way, the Truth, the Life,* p. 148.

human claim is to be denied. And is there one of us who does not know in his heart that this must be, and that a Christ who found in us nothing to curb and even cut away is not any true Master or Saviour? But neither is even this a mere negation of life. Where it lays claim on some natural liberty or enjoyment, it leads —when Christ is in it—to a nobler freedom and a higher happiness; and even where it denies some demand of the heart, it can find, better than the poet, a love 'all breathing human passion far above.'[1] Here is something which may sound unreal and mystical. It is, however, the surest thing in the experience of many a Christian man or woman: of this one who has cast away many prospects to give his young life to some hard task for Christ's sake, and found thus an incomparable liberty and joy; or of that one walking at Christ's call a lonely road, and never feeling except in dream the touch of the child that might have been hers, yet with a heart rich with love's deepest meanings and full of thankfulness for life.

[1] Keats's *Ode to a Grecian Urn,* iii.

'Les renoncements d'un cœur consacré à Dieu sont peu de chose à côté des bénédictions et des enrichissements dont toute âme pieuse fait la journalière expérience.'[1] But this is something not too much to be talked about. It is convincingly to be read not on any page of a book but in the lives—even in the very faces—of the bond-slaves of Christ.

I now pass on to the second part of our question, and this must be dealt with more briefly. It is plain, in the first place, that the relation of the law and gospel of Christ to such universal and objective ideals as scientific truth or artistic beauty is a wider one than that of such individual and subjective aims as those we have been considering. These general ideals are truly of God, and the promotion of them is a part of His praise and service. They are fundamentally religious, and it is not inconceivable how they even may seem worthy

[1] *Qu'est-ce que le Christianisme? Réflexions d'un pasteur laïque,* par Louis Goumaz, p. 138. (This book contains a critical examination of *The Fact of Christ;* and it is a pleasure to quote from a critic who is always courteous and appreciative to a writer with whom he is not always in agreement.)

rivals to a religion of personal piety. It is indeed important to remember that religion is of wider scope than merely human good or human need—though out of these human things it may have arisen in history—and that not merely the soul of the Christian but 'the whole earth' is 'full of the glory of God.' So when science is investigating and art depicting and interpreting the world, it is indeed declaring God's glory which is in it, and His Name who is, in the words of the first article of the Creed, God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.' Certainly in this is something much more than an individualistic pursuit of selfish freedom, happiness, or passion. The relation to religion of servants of the Creator like Darwin or Watts must not be mixed up with the claims of neurotics and anarchists who know neither the true God nor the true man.

I shall endeavour to consider this second part of our problem (as we did also the first part) practically; but one remark of a speculative character may be made at this point, as we begin to ask what is the relation of such things

as science and art to religion. We may naturally think that these may be related to religion in a general theistic sense since God is the Creator, but that they are not immediately or essentially to be related to the specifically Christian gospel of Jesus Christ. Now certainly Christianity is characteristically a human salvation. But the boldest and loftiest Christian thinking has not therefore been content to say that it is no more than this, but has claimed for Christ a cosmical as well as a soteriological meaning. In St. Paul, Christ is, as well as the saviour of men, at once the ἀρχή (or first principle) and the τέλος (or final end) of the created universe. 'All things were created unto Him'—that is, with a view to Him—and all things are 'summed up in Him;'[1] and this high doctrine has its place in the Creed of Nicæa, which asserts the cosmical Christ, 'by whom all things were made, both things in heaven and things in earth,' prior to its assertion of the soteriological Christ 'who for us men and for our salvation came down' and so

[1] Colossians i. 20; Ephesians i. 10.

on. It is true that Christian thought—especially in the West, where the Church has been occupied mainly with the thought of God in His saving relation to man—has not kept very firm hold of this conception nor fruitfully developed it. On this Lightfoot's words are not irrelevant to our present discussion:—

> 'How much our theological conceptions suffer in breadth and fulness by this neglect, a moment's reflection will show. How much more hearty would be the sympathy of theologians with the revelations of science and the developments of history, if they habitually connected them with the operation of the same Divine Word who is the centre of all their religious aspirations, it is needless to say. Through the recognition of this idea, with all the consequences which flow from it as a living influence, more than in any other way, may we hope to strike the chords of that "vaster music" which results only from the harmony of knowledge and faith, of reverence and research.'[1]

On the other hand, one must observe that it is easier to write in a general and rhapsodical way of a doctrine of this speculative character than to state the *data* of reason, history, or

[1] On *Colossians*, p. 116.

experience on which it can be based; and if theology wishes to retain its *status* as a science, it must always have *data* for its dogmas. Dr. Denney says of such words as those of St. Paul which have been quoted, that when they assert Christ as the key of creation it is 'not science but wisdom.'[1] I am inclined—since wisdom suggests something experiential — rather to speak of it in the way Plato speaks of poetry, which he says is written 'not by wisdom but by a kind of genius or inspiration.'[2] And the genius or inspiration at the root of this superb thesis of faith is of the right 'kind,' for it is this—that we cannot err in the direction of thinking too magnificently of Jesus Christ and His place in the universe. Perhaps, then, of this article of the Creed one may say, improving on Tertullian, *Credo quia magnificentissimum!* At any rate—and not to dwell longer on what is speculative—we may here apply this thought practically. Let us, therefore, in our discussion, consider the relation of such things

[1] *The Way Everlasting*, p. 24.
[2] *Apology*, 22.

as science or art to, not religion in some general theistic sense, but specifically to the law and gospel of Jesus Christ, and ask what He means for these great areas of human interest. To this I now turn, though, as I have said, to touch on it in the briefest way.

For the sake of brevity, and also clearness, I shall again treat chiefly of one example. As in the former section I took love, let me here take art.[1] We are all familiar with the *dictum,* 'Art for art's sake.' It is or was a kind of flag for those who would fight against attempts on the part of morals—especially conventional or puritanical morals—to lay down limiting rules about the subjects art should deal with or the way in which it should deal with them. And in that sense it was legitimate enough. Art has a perfect right to object to be made the handmaid of the moralist. Yet this phrase, 'Art for art's sake,' is a very inadequate one. The truth rather is that both art and morals are means—not either a mean to the other but

[1] Art is a large subject, and what follows may seem to some readers not equally applicable to all phases of it. All that can be attempted here is a general indication of a position.

both ministers to a greater common end. This end is simply life itself. The work of art (in, that is, its higher forms) is not something merely self-related but is to express life. It expresses it not in the dull, didactic way of the scientist or the philosopher or the preacher, but by making us see it and feel it as the living thing it really is. We say of a great artist's works that they are 'living,' and through these we live too with a quickened perception and a heightened emotion. Instead, therefore, of the narrow and party formula that 'art is for art's sake,' we must use the larger and only true formula, that art is for life's sake.[1]

Now whenever we say this we are already, without more preliminary words, at the heart of the answer to our question of the connection between art and the gospel. This connection is not that of a restrictive moral censorship. It is something far more fundamental. Art, we say, is for life's sake. Well, life is a new

[1] It is since writing the above that I have noticed that this last phrase is used as the title of one of the essays in Mr. Arthur Ransome's recent volume, entitled *Portraits and Speculations*.

thing since Jesus Christ. Humanity has gained a new vision of what human life is—and even what the life of nature is—from Him. And so art, whose business is to express life, has everything to do with what is Christian. This is not a merely theoretical proposition; one of the great pivot facts in the history of the human mind is how a deeper view of life and of nature has been given by Christianity to the whole spirit of man. That is a shallow and biassed reading of the subject which fastens only or even chiefly on the iconoclastic hostility to art characteristic of some periods of early Church history. Such hostility existed; and much of it was justifiable as an act of war—and in war many violent things are necessary—against vice, with which the art of those days was in open and systematic and intimate alliance. But every intelligent and unprejudiced student either of art or of history knows these iconoclastic acts were mere incidents, and that the really great influence which Christianity had towards art was to make it new because, as has just been said, it made life new. It is

enough on this to quote a few words from an eminent writer on art who is free from any Christian bias. Says John Addington Symmonds:—

> 'At the same time, humanity acquired new faculties and wider sensibilities. A profounder and more vital feeling of the mysteries of the universe arose. Our life on earth was seen to be a thing by no means rounded in itself and perfect, but only one term of an infinite and unknown series. It was henceforth impossible to translate the world into the language of purely æsthetic form. The striving of the spirit marks the transition from the ancient to the modern world.'[1]

Here is the whole world of difference between us and that art of ancient Greece which, in its sphere, is so incomparable that even its secondary achievements have no rival to-day. In a sense, we can never wonder enough at Hellas; and there are invaluable things which the human mind—not in relation to art only but for life—must ever learn and relearn at that source. Yet this world—to which Christ has come—can never again be *only* Greek, and the

[1] *The Greek Poets*, i. 434.

art which truly expresses our life must be more than any pre-Christian art, however, consummate its genius.[1] Thus is it that the Sistine Madonna has something which is in no statue of a Greek goddess, and in a picture of Millet is a meaning that is not in the pastoral on the urn of Keats's superb ode. Nothing would be more interesting than to illustrate this in further detail, but I must not allow my pen this pleasure now.

Out of this, one thing arises which may be mentioned in a word before this chapter closes. I think it now appears that the protest against what is merely sensual and immoral in art has more philosophical justification than at first sight appears. For it is a protest in the name of that 'life' which art is made to serve. Life in the truest and deepest sense is not merely not expressed, but is actually defaced and denied by an art which appeals only or mainly

[1] This is essentially what the finest modern spirits who have been under the spell of the Greek genius find true. We see this, for example, in the development of Keats's mind or, in a later day, in Pater. An example of a man who refused to admit this is Oscar Wilde; and his work is absolutely un-Greek, while of his life I will not speak.

to the grossness of fleshly appetite. And no plea of beauty can atone for this, for 'beauty is truth'—truth not merely of line and colour and form, but of deeper things too. Nor is it enough to say that some genius has done it, and therefore 'the light that led astray was light from heaven;' for, as is most justly remarked by a writer whom I have already quoted in this chapter and elsewhere, 'it is not genius which is made in the divine image, but man,'[1] and genius is rather something man is to control and make his servant. I cannot here enter into the many undoubtedly difficult questions which are thus raised in practical life, and I state merely this general position. On the one hand, I repudiate Mrs. Grundy and her ways. On the other, I say art is responsible to life, and therefore an art which degrades life by expressing only its sensuality—or similarly, a science which does so by hardening the spiritual sense into a materialistic contempt for man—has about it something radically false. It is indeed a treachery against life. And the

[1] Denney's *The Way Everlasting*, p. 97.

protest against it which arises instinctively in every healthy mind is, even if often wrongly expressed or based on untenable grounds, essentially a true protest in the name of life, of which art is a minister and of which the rightful Lord is Christ.

This whole subject of Christ and humanism opens out in manifold directions rather than converges towards a conclusion the longer one discusses it, and I shall therefore bring this chapter to a close abruptly. I close it by recalling a remark from, I believe, a French writer (but I am sorry I am unable to give the reference), to the effect that a man needs to be twice converted—first from nature to grace and then back again to nature. There is in this both philosophy and Christianity. The reason why so many of even the greatest men are not complete in their greatness is that they lack one or other of these two experiences. Goethe was a great man—indeed, he often is instanced as the complete man; but, just because he never was converted from nature to grace, there are great tracts of human experience, and

these the highest and deepest the soul of man has known, which he neither represents nor indeed could appreciate. Pascal was a great man, a man of dominating intellect and of eminent soul; but, while he certainly passed through the first of these conversions, it was hardly so in his case as regards the second, and his Christianity—magnificently conquering as it was for himself—would have been more convincing and adequate for others if it had had more unity with what is true in reason and natural in life. Is not the sum of the matter this? God has given man two great gifts. One is life, with all its interest and sweetness and worth. The other is His 'unspeakable gift,' Jesus Christ. These gifts are from God. They are for man. Let man take *both* from Him. There is the complete man. That and that only is *'Im Ganzen zu leben.'* I know there is danger in saying this; truth and love are always things which we can abuse if we will. But there is no danger if we take life from God and if we take Christ as fully as we take life.

VI

THE VETO OF DEATH

'The Oriental fable of the traveller surprised in the desert by a wild beast is very old.

'Seeking to save himself from the fierce animal, the traveller jumps into a well with no water in it; but at the bottom of this well he sees a dragon waiting with open mouth to devour him. And the unhappy man, not daring to go out lest he should be the prey of the beast, not daring to jump to the bottom lest he should be devoured by the dragon, clings to the branches of a wild bush which grows out of one of the cracks of the well. His hands weaken, and he feels that he must soon give way to certain fate; but still he clings, and sees two mice, one white, the other black, evenly moving round the bush to which he hangs and gnawing off its roots.

'The traveller sees this and knows he must inevitably perish; but, while thus hanging, he looks about him and finds on the leaves of the bush some drops of honey. These he reaches with his tongue and licks them off with rapture.

'Thus I hang upon the boughs of life.'

LEO TOLSTOY.

CHAPTER VI

THE VETO OF DEATH

The chapter just concluded dealt with the positive of human life; this chapter must deal with life's great and final negative. The theme may be less attractive than the other, but it is inevitable. No philosophy of life is adequate or even honest which speaks only of life's fruition and which shuts its eyes to the other side of it. This warm, living world, with its sweetness and interest, is true; but true also—a simply undeniable fact of experience—is the cold, dead grave with all that declines thereto as life goes on. A true philosophy must look both these truths full in the face. We have been looking at life; we must now look at death. It is not morbid to do this; it is only truthful.

But if this, then, be an inevitable chapter in any frank discussion of the facts of experience,

it may and should be not an involved one. The crucial question is a perfectly plain question which awaits a simple answer. There is indeed something not merely utterly futile, but also palpably false, in multiplying words about death. The act of death is nature's almost simplest deed. When the human mind sets itself to express what death is, it strains itself almost to exhaustion. In literature, Newman's *Dream of Gerontius* makes it a most elaborate business. But we do not take so long to die as that. In music, Strauss's *Tod und Verklärung* builds up and up and up a stupendous structure of sound to utter the tremendous word of dissolution. But this tremendous word, nature utters every hour without even raising her breath. Even when a great man dies, is it so. Here is the record from Mr. Gladstone's biography:—

> 'On the early morning of the 19th, his family all kneeling round the bed on which he lay in the stupor of coming death, without a struggle he ceased to breathe. Nature without—wood and wide lawn and far-off sky—shone at her fairest.'[1]

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 528.

When one thinks of all the elements—intellectual, moral, spiritual—that combined to make a personality such as Gladstone's, is there not something silencing in the almost triviality of that negative which ends it all and the casualness of it in the order of things?

'Hi motus animorum atque haec certamina tanta pulveris exigui iactu compressa quiescent.'[1]

High-sounding words, then, are in this chapter out of place. Fine writing would be a transparent folly. Sometimes an inflated orator thinks death a grand theme for the exercise of his powers; but there is in that last silence what makes him seem to be speaking in a dumb show. What does it avail what eloquent persons say *about* death? Has any one anything to say *to* it? Who will answer it? Who or what will take from it the right of having the last word? This is the one thing that matters, and, if it can be met at all, it can be met with plain and few words.

[1] Virgil's *Georgics*, iv. 86-7. ('These tempests of the soul, these Titanic struggles, are quelled and laid to rest by a little handful of scattered dust.')

Something, however, seems called for on the prior point of whether and how far this veto, or apparent veto, of death is a challenge to faith which presses on the mind—even the earnest and Christian mind—of to-day. Is it not the case that men's thoughts, even within the areas of belief, are hardly at all occupied with any question of what is beyond death, but are engrossed—one may say exclusively—with questions of the life that now is and how this is to be elevated and saved? Indeed, is not this intent interest in the bettering of this present world felt as really a higher and nobler aim than the concern about personal immortality? That the modern mind, even within the Church, is bent as these queries suggest, is plain; and it may therefore seem that the consequence is that the question of this chapter is not so inevitable as has been said, but has indeed even lost much of its interest in face of more immediate and practical interests of the Kingdom of God on earth. This is a tendency which deserves a few moments' examination.

In the first place, it is to be said that in the modern engrossment of heart and mind with this world there is much that is true and even noble, and it is a deserved rebuke to any spurious and selfish 'other-worldliness' which cared only about its own soul's future. Of course this engrossment may most easily serve a sheer, shallow worldliness—an absorption of body, mind, and soul with ephemeral pleasure or gain, which leaves neither the desire nor the capacity to think seriously of life's real issues and final destinies. Of this, I do not speak here. But, on its better side, this modern tendency of thought is often a noble engrossment with this world—a desire to make religion practical and a devotion to the service of humanity. Perhaps never than in our age were such desire and devotion stronger in many hearts. That this spirit should feel so keenly how much there is in the conditions of human life in this world which demands the attention of conscience and mind and heart and life, as to make it disregard any thought of another life is not unintelligible, and is something which

even religion has not always the right to censure. Yet, intelligible and, in some sense, even pardonable as this point of view is before the calls and claims of the world around us, I venture to suggest there lies in this tendency a grave danger even to this very passion to promote the Kingdom of God on earth. Let me try to show how this is so.

The social redemption of humanity in this world is a mighty task. It is a task which will never be accomplished without immense energy and devoted service from man for man. This energy and service will not be given except under the constraining power of a profound and permanent motive adequate for these ends. And what I want to suggest is that one of the deepest and even indispensable elements in a motive adequate for the energy and service necessary for the redemption of humanity is this—the sense of the infinite value of man. This, and not less than this, is why humanity is worth saving, should be saved, must be saved at any cost. Motives less than this—humanism, kindness, altruism—will do a good deal

for humanity; but they will not do everything. Those impulses will begin plans for humanity's betterment; but—this, I think, is often to be observed in life—they somehow rarely have in them to carry their service out even to the end. Now, I do not assert that there will be found this constraining conviction of the infinite value of man only along with the conscious belief in personal immortality. But that where there is a consert to forego or ignore the latter, the former will retain its force is impossible. This is not the forecast of prejudiced orthodoxy: it is not denied by the most serious negative thought. The distinguished author of *Ecce Homo* puts it undisguisedly in these words:—

> 'The more our thoughts widen and deepen as the universe grows upon us, and we become accustomed to boundless space and time, the more petrifying is the contrast of our own insignificance, the more contemptible becomes the pettiness, shortness, fragility of the individual life. A moral paralysis creeps upon us. In a while we comfort ourselves with the notion of self-sacrifice; we say, What matter if I pass, let me think of others. But the *other* has become contemptible in less than the self:

> all human griefs alike seem little worth assuaging, human happiness too paltry at the best to be worth increasing.'[1]

These are sombre words. I do not wish to overstrain them or press the argument too far. I believe much service of man will always remain despite any loss of faith in immortality. But the service which will give and save to the uttermost because it is serving and saving something of infinite value will hardly remain. And after all, this world will only be redeemed by men who believe—believe in man if not in God. It will only be redeemed by those who are convinced man is worth saving, because there is about even the humblest and about even the worst something which outweighs and eternally will outweigh any sacrifice made on his behalf. I do not identify this conviction with a positive faith in personal immortality, but I believe that experience, alike in the history of peoples and in individual life, witnesses to their vital interrelation.

One other remark may be made on the

[1] Seeley's *Natural Religion*, p. 251.

modern tendency to ignore or minimise the importance of this question. It is notably ignored in much of modern literature even of the more serious kind, and in philosophy we find a writer of such a non-materialistic temper as the late Professor James admitting, in the act of writing upon immortality, that his feeling about it has never been of the keenest order,' and that it is 'a secondary point.'[1] Even in the religious teaching of to-day little is said of any other world but this. In a sense, such reticence is not altogether a loss, for this great theme should not be the subject of facile talk, and that it should become a topic for the 'popular preacher' would be a kind of profanity. Yet, despite all this avoidance of the question, I wonder if it really is ignored in men's and women's hearts. I do not believe it is. The pressure and poignancy of such a question as this are not a matter merely of the literary or philosophical or homiletical mood of the day. It rests on something far

[1] *Human Immortality* (Ingersole Lecture), p. 11; *Varieties of Religious Experience,* p. 524.

deeper and more permanent than that. In lines which I think in a previous chapter I said are too familiar for quotation, but which I quote here as they are so obviously apt, Browning has said,

> 'Just when we 're safest, there 's a sunset touch,
> A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
> A chorus-ending from Euripides—
> And that 's enough for fifty hopes and fears.' [1]

This—whether thus or otherwise expressed—is permanently true in human nature. To shut down this great question is to gag something in the human heart itself. And especially is this true of the heart which really knows what it is to love. It is impossible to love without thinking about death and what may be after. I am persuaded that here more than anywhere else does the whole question of immortality begin with many people to be a real question. What first awakens their minds to it is not some principle of philosophy or tenet of religion: it is not any inability to conceive our

[1] *Bishop Blougram's Apology.*

own extinction, nor is it a fear of future judgment. Very often it is first awakened when they look on the face of their dear ones—either in life and realise how it is fleeting, or in death and protest against it that their love and fellowship are over for ever. This is as old as Plato: 'Many a man,' he says (or Socrates says), 'has been willing to go to the world below animated by the hope of seeing there an earthly love or wife or son, and conversing with them.'[1] It is as new as the father's heart or the lover's or the widow's to-day. Under this compulsion were the two great English poets of the later Victorian age called to face the question—Tennyson in *In Memoriam,* written after Arthur Hallam's death, and Browning in *La Saisiaz,* evoked by the sudden summoning of his 'companion dear and true,' just as she 'talked and laughed.' Love cannot bury this problem. An old song has the title, 'True till death.' Only till death? It is such a little while for love! For this reason count-

[1] *Phaedo,* 68. It is indeed as old as Homer; *Iliad,* xxii. 386 *et sqq.*

less hearts are *not* ignoring the great idea of immortality.

But, however it may or may not be with regard to human nature in connection with an indifference to this topic—on which we cannot longer stay to say more—surely Christian faith, whenever it realises itself, cannot be indifferent to it, but must feel in death a direct and unavoidable challenge. A single witness may suffice to show this. So strongly does St. Paul feel the challenge of death, that he actually declares that, without immortality, Christianity would be less a gospel than a misfortune, and that Christians would be 'of all men most to be pitied.'[1] This may seem an extreme saying, for surely, whatever the future may have or may not have, it is better to be a good man here than a bad, and live a Christian life than not. To which, I think, the great Apostle would answer somewhat in this wise. Better to be a good man than a bad even here—certainly; that is a matter merely of morality, and morality is always its own sufficient justifica-

[1] 1 *Corinthians* xv. 19.

tion. But do you mean only a morality when you speak of Christianity and even of a Christian life? To be a Christian is something a great deal more than to be a man who tries to be good even according to the Christian ethical standard. To be a Christian is also—and indeed first, for the ethical follows from this—that you can, through Christ, know and love your Father in heaven, and that He, in Christ, gives His love to you and bids you call Him 'Father,' and promises to take up your life, even its sorrows and sins, and save you. Now all this is something far deeper, vaster, more than can be realised within the brief terms of a mortal life. Here it is but begun, as well as continually impeded. If then—so the apostle would conclude—all this is cut off by death after a few hampered years, that would leave the Christian indeed more pitiable than the pagan who had cherished no such passionate hope and therefore meets no such bitter defeat. I have put the above into St. Paul's lips less because it is his argument than because I do not dare to call myself a Christian in a sense

spiritual enough to appreciate it at its fullness; but if we were really Christians—persons to whom to love and be loved by God in Christ is a passion and a possession—we should appreciate it and should feel that a gospel indifferent about immortality was a kind of outrage. That God shall call us 'friends'—and leave His friends to die!

And yet how dim it all seems! The Greek tragedian's words sound sometimes more real than the apostle's:

> 'But if any far-off state there be
> Dearer than life to mortality,
> The hand of the Dark hath hold thereof,
> And mist is under and mist above;
> And so we are sick for life, and cling
> On earth to this nameless and shining thing;
> The other life is a fountain sealed
> And the deeps below us are unrevealed,
> And we drift on legends for ever.'[1]

'Legends!' Well, at least, we can deliver ourselves from that. Let us try to face the facts about death whatever they be.

[1] Euripides, *Hyppolitus,* i. 189-97 (Gilbert Murray's translation).

When, then, we turn to do this, we see at once the palpable and hideous fact of dissolution, and our minds are met with the plain assertion—so often maintained to be an empirical truth of science—that indisputably and indeed obviously, when the material organism of the body is dissolved, conscious life, which is a function or at least a concomitant of organic structure, must cease. If this be fact, *cadit quaestio.* Whether or not it be fact depends upon a single and simple issue—the issue namely whether the conscious life of man is so related to the perishable physical organism that, if the latter be destroyed, the former must thereupon cease to be. This is a question which we must meet before we have the right to go further.

It is obvious that the answer to this question depends on the *kind* of relation existing between body and spirit, brain and mind.[1] That there is a relationship between the two elements is indisputable, and it is, moreover, marvel-

[1] The substance of the argument of this paragraph is more fully developed in James's *Human Immortality.*

lously subtle and intricate—so much so that a physical movement is associated with every mental one. But things may be related to each other in more ways than one. Thus steam is related to a locomotive engine. It is so related to it that if you destroy the engine, there is an end to the steam. Why? Because the relationship here is a causal one—the engine causes the steam to be produced. But take, say, a ray of light in a prism. The refraction and colorisation of the ray of light are in manifest relation to the prism, and any movement of the latter is accompanied by a movement in the former. But if you destroy the prism you do not extinguish the light. Why not? Because the relationship here is not that of a cause—the prism does not cause the light to come into existence—but is rather that of a medium of one form of its manifestation. Well, then, the whole question of the possibility of the continuance of conscious life after the destruction of the body is simply this—is the relationship of matter to spirit that of a cause as an engine's is to steam, or that of a medium as a

prism's is to light? Now, the moment it is perceived that this is the true statement of the question, then it is also clear that no science has any mandate from known physical facts to declare immortality impossible. For no science has even the slightest inkling of *how* matter and spirit are related. Why and how a movement of the molecules of the brain should accompany consciousness (or *vice versâ*) is a thing of which no kind of explanation is available or even imaginable. The *nexus* is—to use Tyndall's oft-quoted word for it—'unthinkable.' How then can you dogmatically assert that it is a causal *nexus*? But unless it be shown to be a causal *nexus*, unless it be shown *not* to be such a connection as, for example, that of a prism to light—supplying the medium for one form of its manifestation—then to proscribe the possibility of immortality is to exceed any warrant from scientific facts. In contrast therefore to the unjustified dogmatism of writers such as Haeckel on this subject, I shall quote one of the justest and sanest unbelievers since David Hume. 'There is,'

says John Stuart Mill, 'no evidence in science against the immortality of the soul but that negative evidence which consists in the absence of evidence in its favour.'[1] Science, then, has the right to be altogether agnostic on the question, even utterly sceptical, for there is nothing in the realm of physical science which suggests an answer in the affirmative. But there is certainly nothing to authorise a dogmatic decision in the negative.

This then clears the way for us to look at another aspect of man's being than the physical. For there are two aspects under which man's nature may be contemplated, and if one—the physical—suggests the limitation of finite and temporal existence, the other—the spiritual—certainly suggests what transcends it. Take the two things in the life of a human being which essentially differentiate it from the life of any other creature in the animal world. These are reason and morality. Both of these things are of more than sense and time. The rational life is. The intelligence that knows things in

[1] *Three Essays on Religion: Theism,* pt. iii.

time is not and cannot be itself merely of time, and indeed there could not be for us such a conception as that of time unless we, who conceive it, stood above it. The moral life is. The conscience neither seeks its authority from the things of this world nor binds itself to justify its laws by them. Moreover, the aims which these rational and moral principles of his being set before man are aims which he knows are quite out of his reach of attainment within this finite life; the task of reason, which is to know the truth, and the task of morality, which is to realise the ethical ideal, are alike incumbent upon us as men and impossible for us as mortals. This, then, is man in his spiritual aspect—a being who, if he will live the life which essentially and distinctively is man's, must use categories of thought and obey principles of conduct which have alike their source and their satisfaction beyond the 'bourne of Time and Place.' In a word, man is a being who, whether or not he actually is immortal, is called on to live as if he were.

It is when we consider this essentially eternal

element in human nature that we find that man is a being at least fit for more than this little span of life. As Dr. Martineau has said, 'were it the will of the Creator to change His arrangement for mankind, and to determine that they should henceforth live in this world ten or a hundred times as long as they do at present, no one would feel that *new souls* would be required for the execution of the design.'[1] Consider what this means. This soul of man—domiciled in time, but bid to live and fit to live for a reason and a morality which are of more than time—is the supreme achievement of the whole process of nature. By a development, slow, stupendous, often terrible, evolution has worked unhastingly, unrestingly towards this supreme achievement, man, the law of whose being is that he does not only live for the demands of the finite—such as eating and drinking, self-defence, propagation of species, and so on—but also and above all by principles and for ends that are eternal. Now 'God and nature,' said Aristotle, 'do nothing in vain.'

[1] Martineau's *Endeavours after the Christian Life*, p. 126.

That the whole process of life is rational, all science as well as all faith must hold as its first hypothesis. Is it, then, rational to evolve a being which is eternal in principle and yet doomed in fact to what is temporal? Is it reasonable to demand of man that he live as if he were immortal when, in reality, he is not? Such questions involve far more than any mere desire on our part for another life. It is not that we desire it: rather is it that nature requires it if her work is not to be in vain. It is an argument from the rationality of things, and the reason which is in all the work of nature. 'And thus,' says a well-known writer on evolution, 'I believe in the immortality of the soul not in the sense in which I accept demonstrable truths of science, but as a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God's work.'[1]

This is the highest argument for human immortality, which can be adduced by reason looking at the question, as it were, from below upwards. We feel it most not when we

[1] Fiske's *Destiny of Man*, p. 62.

think of it abstractly as true of 'man,' but when we consider the passing of some great soul. It is this which gives its perennial impressiveness to the incomparable scenes of the *Phaedo,* the great argument of which after all is not any of Plato's speculations about the soul's connection with eternal 'ideas,' but is Socrates himself. In modern literature, Browning's confident convictions and Tennyson's more wistful and yet unquenchable faith have the same basis. We all feel it. We all feel the irony of the contrast between the body's decay and dissolution into nothingness, and the growth and maturity of the soul and character within. Physical life is a *peau de chagrin*— to use the figure of Balzac's famous tale— which shrinks and becomes smaller and finally vanishes; but moral life is not a *peau de chagrin,* and it is at its greatest often when the other ends. There is an irony here which is even an irrationality, and it makes a strong plea in moral reason for immortality.

And yet, when all is said, can our faith really stand on this in face of the great world? For

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myself, I find it hard to think so. When we bring this out from the chamber of the mind, where it sounds full and strong, and repeat it in the vast halls of the universe, it seems to fall faint and flat upon the ear. Now, by this, I most distinctly do not mean that this or any other great spiritual conviction of the soul is to be bullied into timorous silence by the mere dead immensities of time and space. After all, man, as Pascal says, *n'est qu'un roseau, le plus faible de la nature mais c'est un roseau pensant.*[1] After all, mind will be found to be more than matter in the day of judgment. I abhor the materialism which would terrorise faith with vulgar immensities of matter. It is not the dead immensities before which this thought of immortality dwindles. It is the vastness of the reason of the universe. You tell me to believe in my personal continuance after death as an act of faith in the reason in nature's work. But what a large word that is! We see the fringes of it in the story of the evolution of man, of species, of worlds. Surely there

[1] *Pensées*, II. x.

may well be a reason for and in all that, and yet that reason hardly needs my eternal conscious existence for its justification. Surely it is conceivable that the universe is rational even though

> 'Many a hearth upon our dark globe sighs after
> many a vanished face,
> Many a planet by many a sun may roll with
> the dust of a vanished race.'[1]

Again let me make clear that it is not the mere immensity of the universe I am speaking of, but the immensity of the plan—the reason—of the universe. That world-reason evolved me and uses me, but not therefore does it need me eternally. It may use me, and be done with me, and pass on to wider ends. That were entirely rational; and, as we look at the facts

[1] Tennyson's *Vastness*, I. Having named both Tennyson and Browning on this subject, I may observe that the latter looks at the problem of immortality only in view of the individual, but the former feels the pressure upon it of the sense of the universe. For this reason Browning is the more assertive, and one might almost say 'cock-sure'; while Tennyson has another note in his faith, and one which is really deeper. Browning says things about immortality more strikingly than Tennyson ever does; but I am not sure but that the latter saw more about it.

of life, is it not almost palpably the case? For if it be replied that this means the waste of what, after all, is the greatest thing—personal spirit and character—I admit it. But is not this waste just one of the most appalling yet undeniable things in life? In an earlier chapter I mentioned this as one of the leading impressions which Shakespere's view of existence shows us; but the thoughtful mind does not need to go to Shakespere to feel it, for it is apparent every day, whatever may be said of it, that the order of this world is consistent with constant waste of resources and frustration of capacity. There are arrested organisms everywhere, and indeed their very failure is the contribution they pay to nature's evolution to her further ends. In face of all this—all this sense of the universe and these facts of life—can we really lean our faith in personal immortality upon its necessity in the rationality of the cosmic order, or even what, speaking more religiously, we call 'the reasonableness of God's work'? I cannot find that anchor hold when one gets out to deeper waters and feels the

surges of the mighty seas. And yet, as Plato said long ago—all the fundamental and needful things about this question were said long ago—this is 'the best and most irrefragable of human theories,' and 'the raft upon which man sails through life, not without risk, as I admit, if he cannot find some word of God which will more surely and safely carry him.'[1]

What more then is to be said? Whither shall we turn our minds for that 'word' which may 'more surely and safely carry' us? Well, here we find ourselves once more in the position we reached in more than one of our previous discussions. In discussing, for example, pain, we found that many things were to be said about it which did cast a measure of illumination upon it for faith; but that in the end, and when there was no more to be said about *it*, we saw that a complete faith could be reached only if we could say something more, not about pain, but about God. It is so in this question also. We have been saying things about man —about, especially, that element in man which

[1] *Phaedo*, 85.

is of more than time—and this does at least suggest the immortal hope; but in the end what we must again seek is not so much something more about man as something more about God. What this is it is not difficult to say. For what is it which is inadequate for the assurance of faith in our personal immortality when we speak, as we have been doing, of the reason of God's work? It is just that, as has been indicated, this universal reason is a vast and general purpose to which I am not—at least necessarily—of personal and permanent value. What is lacking is the thought of God as not merely Reason related to some ultimate purpose 'to which the whole creation moves,' but as a Father related in eternal love and care to us His children—One who cares for us far too deeply *and individually* to lose hold of us in the darkness of the night. It is thus just the thought of God which is brought to us in the experience of religion, and is made sure to us in Jesus Christ.

This is the one firm basis for a faith in immortality. It is not an argument from a

philosophy of human nature, but an implicate in the religion which knows God as our Father. It is upon this experience of God, and not simply upon an analysis of the soul, that those great saints of past ages have taken their stand, who have been able to pass from the wistfulness of hope on this matter to the certitude of faith. Here lies the quite unmistakable difference between the reasonings, even at their high-water mark, of the *Phaedo,* and the amazing sureness of the supreme utterances about immortality in the Book of Job or in the Psalms. What made Job say, 'I know that . . . after my frame is destroyed . . . I shall, even disembodied, see God'?[1] What made the writer of the seventy-third Psalm write so calmly, 'Thou shalt afterwards take me to glory'?[2] It was not that these men were philosophers. It was not that they knew a great deal about the soul of man.. It was that they knew that God was their own God—their Friend who had made Himself known to them—and they were safer in His hands than any child is in the

[1] *Job* xix. 25, 26. [2] *Psalm* lxxiii, 24.

hands of its father. I shall express this further —for it is important though it is simple—in the words of a great Old Testament scholar:—

> 'This was the anchor of the Old Testament saints. They knew God, they had found Him. In His grace He had come near to them, and removed their transgressions from them. They had His fellowship. They walked with Him. They were His friends. They were even His children. He loved them—and He was life and He gave them life—and they felt it to be impossible that He should cease to love them, and therefore impossible that He could let them die. Here was then hope of eternal life—to know God. He could not break this tie of love between Him and them, for He loveth with an everlasting love. He could not let them ever go from His heart any more than a father could let go his child. "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yet these may forget, yet will not I forget thee." '[1]

Here, I say again, is the real and sure basis of a faith in personal immortality. That God loves me has as its corollary that I shall not die in the dust. If the fellowship with God

[1] A. B. Davidson's *Waiting upon God*, p. 102.

into which we are called through the gospel which is in Jesus Christ be true and real, then God pledges His love to us in a way which means more than a few years here can fulfil. There is thus no such thing as an argument for immortality in the sense of some logical proposition of physical fact which proves it. The argument for immortality is just the gospel.

It might seem that one may stop here, and, indeed, that to seek more is to seek lower. The late Dr. Edward Caird, Master of Balliol, often insisted on this. To him 'the spiritual life is or ought to be its own evidence,' and to connect it or in any way rest it on 'the believed fact of the Resurrection of Christ,' as the first apostles and even St. Paul (who 'more than any other penetrated to the spiritual meaning of Christianity') did, is to sink to the attitude of the Jews 'who demanded of Christ signs and wonders that they might believe on Him.'[1] It seems to me there is here both a truth and a confusion. The truth is what has already been said more than once—that the basis of faith in

[1] *Evolution of Religion,* ii. 239, *sqq.*

immortality is the spiritual life with God, and certainly for an unbelief which has not that basis to ask as its *substitute* a physical demonstration would be open to the charge of seeking a mere sign or wonder. But it is not the same thing to say that this faith—its basis still the life lived with God—finds its *fulfilment* in Jesus Christ, who is come to be not merely a prophet but the end of prophecy. It is the latter which is the Christian position as regards the Resurrection on Easter-day. This was not a sign given to unbelief to turn it into faith, but the completed word of God to a faith to which the victory over death was still but a promise,—a word given by Him 'in whom the promises of God are yea and amen.' That God, revealing Himself in Christ, should make good that promise may or may not be incredible, but has certainly nothing in it which is unspiritual, unless indeed the whole idea of an historical revelation be unspiritual. It is easy for philosophers to take the attitude of being superior to the need for anything of this kind. They forget they are living to-day after eighteen cen-

turies of the Easter tradition. I will go so far as to say this—that but for Easter, faith in immortality would be only a rare and a sickly plant in the human mind. Certainly it would never have rung through the world as it did in the first Christian preaching. Consider what the Easter fact meant to faith in this respect. 'Surely,' said this one and that among great Old Testament saints before Christ, 'surely God who loves us, and has called us into fellowship with Himself, does not and cannot leave us to die in the dust.' But against this—to which after all only high souls like the author of the seventy-third Psalm attained—remained the persistent and unshaken witness of death. 'The fathers, where are they? and the prophets, have they lived for ever?' The only answer is *mors ultima linea rerum.* Death simply went on, as it goes on with us. They buried their dead, as we bury them. 'The rest is silence.' Now faith might and did live through all this, for, in our imperfect lives, God does not yet fully reveal His love and power. But then came One whom these be-

lievers found—and we too find—reason to regard as indeed the true and full and final revelation. Well, does even He fulfil this hope, so faithfully clung to despite such uninterrupted denial, that not death but life is God's last word with the children of His love? Or here too, with even the 'well-beloved Son of the Father,' is death still the *ultima linea* and the 'rest' still 'silence'? If so, faith must just go back to the yet uncontradicted deed of death, with its great hope, not merely still unverified but discouraged as it never was before.

> 'Ashes to ashes, dust to dust:
> As of the unjust, also of the just—
> *Yea of that Just One too!*
> This is the one sad gospel that is true.'[1]

I repeat I do not see much reason to think that if the last available fact about Jesus Christ had been the common terminus of the grave, the religious mind would—except, perhaps, in a few instances—have got over that. Certainly faith would never have *triumphed* over it if the Church had had no Easter message,

[1] A. H. Clough, *Easter Day*, i.

and if the New Testament were not, as it so conspicuously is, the Book of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Here I wish to say that it is to fail not only in charity but in justice to speak peremptorily to those whose minds are inhospitable to the story of the Resurrection, and are perplexed by obvious difficulties. I can quite understand a man saying that here is something to which it is impossible to apply the tests of fact, and which has yet to be explained, or to find true forms of historical expression. I can sympathise with that. What I cannot sympathise with, and what I find it difficult to treat with any intellectual respect, is the flimsy account of the matter which is sometimes offered to us in the name of rational criticism. Here is a most interesting and a unique historical problem—namely to give some *rationale* of the exultant gospel of the early Church. This is a fact, and—it should be remembered—a fact far older than any document of the Resurrection story. Now do not tell me that men, who watched their Master's pallid head sink in

death, and who laid His lifeless form in the grave, got over the impression of the reality and finality of that in a few days on the strength of this kind of thing:—

> '"He must come again!" The men whispered it and looked longingly at each other. "He must come again:" the lake whispered it, and the trees and the wind in the night about them in that region where He had been moving about only two weeks before. "I must see Him again," said Peter, who had denied that he had known Him. "If not, then I cannot live."
>
> '"Hark, didst thou not see something, Peter?"
> 'The next day, the first rumour started.' [1]

And so on. This, we are told (in the preface of the work from which the above is taken), is the start of the story 'as it has been investigated by German scientific study.' A highly touched-up picture like this is the last thing that has the right to call itself scientific history. It is neither science nor history: it is fancy from its first line to its last. To begin with, the only glimpse we have of the state of mind of the followers of Jesus after His death is not any-

[1] Gustav Frenssen's *Story of Jesus*, E. T., pp. 75-6.

thing the least like this 'He must come again,' but is a quiet acceptance of it that all was over. 'We trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel;' we thought it would be, but it is not to be. I cannot call it anything else than an historical impertinence, calmly and without one scrap of evidence, to substitute for this convincingly genuine glimpse of the disciples' mind, a purely fancy sketch of men whispering 'He must come again.' Further, even if Peter was in this pathetic, not to say neurotic, mood, is he the first man or the last who has yearned to see again a dead friend whom in life he had wronged? And would the love of those who thus yearned to see their dear Master be content to build on 'rumour;' would it not—just because it was love—make *sure* about it, exactly as you would if you heard a rumour that some one very dear to you, whom you thought had been dead, was yet alive?[1] And if there was a Peter (or a Mary

[1] In St. Luke xxiv. 22-4 we find disciples actually doing this; the result, since 'Him they saw not,' left them only 'sad' (v. 17) and in anything but the mood Frenssen depicts.

Magdalene) to start these rumours, was there not a Thomas to test them? Above all, were there not bitter and influential enemies of the news, who, the moment it was proclaimed, as it indubitably was at once, could prick the bubble in a day, not by arguing with or making martyrs of the apostles, but simply by exhuming the corpse? I do not here argue these points; they and many more have been argued many a time. The inadequacy of the whole theory is admitted by criticism itself in the fact that it must be buttressed up by desperate aids such as Keim's of a 'telegram from heaven' telling the disciples Jesus lived.[1] I repeat that I have sympathy with those who find in the Easter story something still to be told in adequate forms of historical expression; but I find nothing either to help to this or to respect historically in the attempt (as a modern writer aptly put it) 'to discredit supernatural stories which have some foundation simply by telling natural stories which have no foundation.'[2] This is

[1] *Jesus of Nazareth,* vi. 364.
[2] G. K. Chesterton's *Orthodoxy,* p. 75.

indeed to make history, as Carlyle calls it, 'a distillation of Rumour.' For my part, I prefer my history neat.

This has been somewhat of a digression; yet the Resurrection of Christ is historically so great a factor in Christian faith that a reference to it here was essential. At the same time, I would not even seem to make this the basis of the Christian belief in a life greater than death. It is, as I have indicated, the fulfilment of a great hope as to that—'Christ the first-fruits;' but the basis of Christian faith in immortality remains the love of God Who has called us unto His eternal fellowship. *Socii Dei sumus.* And even this is not the basis of the *fact* of immortality, for if so only believers and saints would be immortal, and that, as a phrase of Plato's puts it, 'would be to give the bad too good a bargain.' Napoleon said on his deathbed, *N'est pas athée qui veut;* and similarly may it be said not every one is mortal that would like to be. But it may seem that to base even faith in immortality—as distinguishable from the fact of it—on the experi-

ence of fellowship with God means that only the saints can have a really sure hope as to the life eternal. How many of us can claim so deep a religious experience as to enable us to say we know God has pledged His love to us in a way which makes it impossible for us to be left in the grave? Well, it is true that immortality is not to be believed in lightly: indeed, when it is believed in lightly, it is not believed in at all. Yet, we need not therefore say that only the saints can know it. For it is not only the saints whom the love of God has called into fellowship with Himself. That God loves us, speaks to us, redeems us, keeps hold of us—all this may be not less surely brought home to us sinners. It is in the experience of many who are far indeed from presuming to regard themselves as advanced in spiritual things. Therefore we too may dare to learn this sublime faith in the life greater than death which is pledged to us by God our Father. We may learn it as regards others—our dear dead whom we think of, perhaps, every day—and shall then, even when also sad,

be expectant and even elate. We may learn it as regards even ourselves, learning it here, it may be, with something of that incredulous surprise with which once a thief on a cross, dying the bitter death and the blackness of night settling down upon his soul, heard the amazing assurance that he—*he!*—would enter Paradise.

VII

THE COMMENT OF TO-DAY

'The action of Christ, who is risen upon the world which He has redeemed, fails not but increases.'

LORD ACTON.

CHAPTER VII

THE COMMENT OF TO-DAY

The discussions in the foregoing chapters have obviously not covered all 'facts of life'—no one in reason could expect that they should—but I trust that it has been found by the reader that the aspects of the problem raised for faith in life which have been dealt with are typical and also crucial aspects; and further, that these have been dealt with, while certainly not exhaustively, at least not evasively. Other directions along which similar discussions might be pursued at once suggest themselves. But I desire to bring this book—which, since the majority of things in the world of utterance are too long, shall avoid that fault to atone for whatever others it may exhibit—to a close, and I think this last chapter may more usefully be turned in a different direction. Christianity is not merely a fact of personal life; it is also

a fact of the life of the world. It is what the Germans call *welt-historisch*. It may therefore be tested in the light of history, which is the most impartial of intellectual tribunals, and in relation to facts larger than the facts of the merely individual life. This more comprehensive consideration of the problem of faith demands some attention before we close.

Let us, however, particularise the issue within reasonable limits. I have no intention here—and it would be manifestly absurd to attempt it within a single chapter—to delineate the Christian philosophy of history or even to describe the witness of the Christian centuries to faith in any general way. Nor shall I discuss the general relations between Christianity and the great civilisation into which it entered, nor even the historic theme of how it was the faith of Christ which saved civilisation from a despairing dissolution at that unparalleled and indeed appalling hour when the Roman Empire, sole trustee of the order of the world, was foundering in the shoals of time, not from any remediable breakdown of its constitutional

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machinery, nor from any lack of knowledge of essential political or even moral principles, but simply and literally because men, being without God and without hope in the world, were impotent to carry on the greatness or goodness, and were preserving only the degradation and corruption of the past. Here are subjects which never lose their grandeur of interest for the student of the human drama—subjects, however, not to be attempted within the limits of this chapter. Our aim here must be something very much simpler and also something nearer to hand.

Let us, as in our previous discussions, take a few typical and crucial test points which may illustrate the verdict or comment of the centuries on the claim of Christian faith, and which may be answered without elaborate historical research. Especially let us take points which may be tested in the light of the present day. We are starting from the position that time tests things. It *places* men and movements as hardly anything else does; it adjusts their valuation. Especially does it reduce any exagger-

ated estimates to their due proportions. Thus, as Bacon says, 'truth has been rightly named the daughter of time.' From this point of view, then, let us ask this question, what does to-day say of the estimate which faith has put alike upon the Master and upon the message of Christianity? Has the view that Jesus Christ is not merely one man in the world's population but the Lord and Saviour of all men been found out, by the test of nearly twenty centuries, to be an untenable exaggeration? Does the idea that the Christian gospel is indeed the Word of God which endureth for ever and the absolute and final religion hold good in our modern world with its essentially modern problems? These are important questions for faith; in dealing with them I shall try to take, as has been said, typical and crucial points which will test the issue.

First, then, we shall ask what is the comment of time as regards the estimate of Jesus Himself. This is primary, for Christianity is not a system but an attachment to a Person. Here we are concerned not with ecclesiastical dogma

but with facts of life and of the world. Now, amidst all the doctrinal dubiety prevalent in the modern theological mind, there are facts about Jesus which are clearer to-day than ever they have been. From these I take one of most relevant interest for our question.

It is this. When Jesus lived on earth His followers declared of Him that 'He did no sin.' He Himself, indeed, is reported to have challenged any one to convict Him of sin, and not even His enemies could take up the challenge. So 'the sinlessness of Jesus' has always been a theme which has found a place in religious and theological thought. But there is something not very satisfying about such an expression. It is negative, and emphasises what Jesus was not rather than conveys any rich and living idea of what He was. But the richness of what He was could not be perceived at once. It could not be fully apprehended by His contemporaries. It is only as the ages have gone on, and as men of different epochs and different types have been brought into contact with Jesus, that the content of His personality has been made

apparent. The result is something far richer and most positive than anything which is expressed by the mere negative of the word 'sinless.' It is better expressed if we say that Jesus has proved to be the complete, the perfect humanity. Sinlessness excludes, and it excludes one element—that which is bad. But the complete or perfect humanity of Jesus includes everything which is good. He is not merely the supreme saint; He is the Son of Man. The ages, which in the case of every other great figure of the past discovers his limitations, in this case disclose a humanity which has no limitations but is an ideal and inspiration for mankind in every age. Here is not a great Jew of the first century. Here is more even than *a* man: here is Man.

All this may seem somewhat general, and the reader will ask that this completeness or perfection said to be in Jesus Christ should be stated in plainer terms as a fact in life and history. Well, it is a fact in life and history wherever Christianity has been genuinely exemplified that not one age only nor one type

of character only, but every type (that is, of course, which is not morally evil) in every age has learned its highest in the school of Christ. There is not in the whole range of human nature anything which is good which is not strengthened, deepened, purified by contact with Him. His personality reaches past the dividing lines which separate humankind into classes and schools and sects. That this is so of merely social or educational or ecclesiastical divisions is not wonderful; but He overreaches divisions far deeper than these. The deepest and most ineffaceable dividing lines that cross the area of human life are, I take it, race and sex. As to the former, is it not true that Jesus Christ is as much to the Christian in England to-day as He was to the Jews in Palestine who first called Him Master—so much so that we in England practically never think of Him as having been a Jew; and further, that He is nothing more to the Christian in England than He is to the Christian in the far Orient or in the heart of Africa? As to the latter of these dividing lines, is it not enough to say that

womanhood no less than manhood, as manhood no less than womanhood, has found in Him its inspiration and ideal? These are plain facts of life and history which the centuries have proved to every candid mind. They mean a character to be described by some far more positive and opulent term than 'sinless.' Even 'perfect' seems too vague and general a word. They mean a personality of which we must say this, that it is adequate for all humanity as its inspiration and ideal. There is no other who has been born of woman of whom anything even approaching to this may be said. There have been great men; there has been but One who is Man.

About this a further thing is to be said which it is of importance to say in view of modern philosophies which vehemently turn away from Christ for at least some ideals of character. What has been urged may seem to suggest that Jesus is a little of every one because not very pronouncedly any one thing in particular—that He is what, in Aristotelian phrase, may be called a 'mean,' rather than the ideal of any

specific type of life, especially of the stronger kind. Nothing could be further from the truth than this. On the contrary, in Him and in contact with Him the varying elements in human nature—again, of course, which are not evil—come to their height. There is no abasement like the shame He evokes and no nobleness like the honour He confers; none are so submissive as the Christian, none so inflexible; the worldling has no such sorrow and no such joy; nowhere are greater sympathy and tenderness and love, but nowhere a judgment so searching, a severity so terrible, so awful a hate. The gospel does not take all the aspects of human nature and boil them down into one tasteless and colourless jelly; it takes each one and purifies it till it is tenfold itself. That is why the Christian is—has proved himself in history—at once the weakest and the strongest man in the world.

It is on this last point I wish to say a word in view of current philosophies, and especially the philosophy of one remarkable, if also unhinged, writer of modern days. Finding in

Christ such characteristics as gentleness, meekness, forgiveness, Nietzsche rejects Him as *'décadent'*[1] and His morality as the 'morality of slaves,' preaching to us instead the ideal of the 'super-man' who shall exemplify a 'morality of mastery' in a life which above all else—above even distinctions of good and evil—is 'power.' I shall not stay to repel this description of Jesus, which, coming from poor Nietzsche, is pitiable even more than profane. Let us at once test the two prophets and their gospels in life and history. And this I will say confidently—in countless lives Christ has created the heroic, while Nietzsche evokes only the hectic. This so-called 'powerful' morality appeals not to genuine virility, but rather to that kind of femininity which is mastered by mere egotism.[2] And it is no contribution to power to declare 'I preach the over-man;' the thing is to produce him. When Nietzsche calls

[1] *The Anti-Christ: An Attempt at a Criticism of Christianity,* § 31.

[2] This is an echo of a remark made somewhere by Eucken.

for 'masters,' we remember the immortal retort:—

'Why so can I and so can any man:
But will they come when you do call for them?'[1]

What we want from the prophet is the source of strength. That is not merely shouting; a really strong man does not go about announcing (as Henley does) an 'unconquerable soul' and that the years will 'find me unafraid.'[2] Nor is the source of strength a spirit that scoffs at love and pity and tenderness; a man is never at his strongest when he is *only* strength. Here is the source of it. The strongest thing in all human history has been not a sword but a Cross. 'When I am weak then am I strong'—that is the secret. The gospel has it, and that is why the Christianity of the Cross has been an anvil which has broken many hammers. This combination of apparent contradictories

[1] Shakespere's *King Henry IV.*, Pt. I. iii. 1.

[2] From Henley's poem entitled *Invictus*—a striking poem, no doubt, in some respects.

is unique in Christianity. Mr. Chesterton states it in his characteristic style:—

> 'It is constantly assumed, especially in our Tolstoyan tendencies, that when the lion lies down with the lamb, the lion becomes lamb-like. But that is brutal annexation and imperialism on the part of the lamb. That is simply the lamb absorbing the lion instead of the lion absorbing the lamb. The real problem is: Can the lion lie down with the lamb and still retain his royal ferocity? *That* is the problem the Church attempted; *that* is the miracle she achieved.'[1]

It was not the Church that did it but Christ; but, that aside, the statement is not more epigrammatical than historical.

All this, of course, does not mean that the centuries are the basis of faith in Christ. He

[1] *Orthodoxy*, p. 177. The superabundant cleverness of this book is really its fatal defect as a plea for Christianity. For the one thing which cleverness never does is to touch the conscience, and this is the spot which Christianity cannot leave untouched. Thus *Orthodoxy* is an example of a brilliant religious *apologia* which leaves behind it hardly anything of a religious impression. However, it takes all kinds of people to convert the world, and this feature of Mr. Chesterton's work should not prevent the reader from perceiving the soundness of many positions in it regarding Christianity, which the book lights up, if not with apostolic fire, certainly with astonishing fireworks.

is that to Himself as One whose fellowship and forgiveness are for us of God. But the ages are a corollary to faith because they have not reduced the Figure who claims to be more than merely one other man among men. Time has tested Jesus, who presented Himself as a Lord and Saviour of men, and it has not found Him wanting as new epochs arose, new races were discovered, new types of life and character were brought into contact with Him. Time has *placed* Jesus, not as merely a Jewish peasant of a now long-past day, but as adequate to be the ideal and the inspiration of all time and of the whole humankind. The best and last proof of this is personal. My best self is recognised and realised before and with Him: yours, too. This is indeed the Son of Man and Saviour of us all.

Amplifications and illustrations of how Jesus Christ has thus proved adequate to history suggest themselves, and are indeed obvious; but we must pass on to the other part of our theme, and inquire what comment time has made on the Christian message. Here one crucial test

may suffice. If Christianity be the supreme Word of God it claims to be, then it must have the element of finality. That, of course, does not mean that its content is discovered once and for all. On the contrary, the content of Christianity is only gradually being discovered; we have yet to learn what, for example, the Oriental mind will find in it in addition to what the Greek or Latin or Teutonic mind has found. Finality, in this connection, means that the gospel never becomes obsolete, or something which, whatever value it may have had for circumstances of another day, is of no essential value for the new conditions of the world, and may therefore be superseded and discarded. This is a crucial test of the message of Christianity as the supreme and absolute religion, and it is one which may well be applied after twenty centuries and in view of the facts and problems of to-day. It is, moreover, a test of peculiar significance for an age such as ours, which is so conscious of the immense advance which recent years have witnessed in every department of thought that to

be even 'early Victorian' is to be little better than a dodo. Whatever the present age is, for good or evil, certainly it is a new age. The result of this is that, in a great deal of modern thinking or writing, there is almost the assumption that Christian faith and Christian ethics cannot be looked to for the solving of modern questions. Indeed, the very idea of finality, in religion as in anything else, is to the present-day mind unacceptable and intolerable. The truth is that the strong wine of evolution has rather gone to the head of the modern philosopher, and he lays down its principles *a priori* as applying to Christ and to Christianity without any special examination of the facts. It is true and indeed notable that there is to-day no very serious attempt to produce or predict a better religion—the new teacher whose coming is, I understand, anticipated in theosophical circles, need not be discussed till he arrives—but there is the wide acceptance, on general evolutionary grounds, of the idea that 'religions, like all things that are ours and human, have their day of declension; nor can Chris-

tianity form an exception to the universal rule.'[1] Well, this last remark says something which is not to be settled simply by laying down *a priori* a supposed 'universal rule,' but only by a fair examination of the facts about what Christianity is and can do to-day. This is what we propose to test.

I wish to test this in as precise and practical a way as possible; what that way is I shall state presently. First, however, one word may be said of a general character about this 'rule' that religions decline and are superseded. What sets this in operation is visible in history. As a matter of fact, the force which most surely has caused religions of the past to be discarded is when their ideas—and especially their ideas of God—have been felt to be inadequate and unworthy by the growing moral sense of the people. A notable and interesting example is the ethical criticism which undermined the ancient Greek religion. In that religion, the lives of the gods were a story of constant amours and intrigues and crimes. But the ethical sense

[1] J. A. Symonds's *Essays, Speculative and Suggestive,* p. 5.

of the best minds in Greece began to criticise this. Euripides, for example, reproaches the god Apollo (who had seduced and then deserted Creusa) just as a right-minded man to-day might denounce a betrayer of woman. Plato refuses to take as true of God Homer's story that Zeus sends to men lying dreams. It was this kind of ethical criticism that simply killed the old paganism of Greek legend, though it thus served morality. Now I hardly need to argue that faith in the God revealed in Jesus Christ—I do not say the God described in theologies—is in no danger of being superseded in this way. No one can demand in the name of conscience a purer or more moral and spiritual idea of God than is in the face of Jesus. That idea may be too high and good to be true; but certainly the most ethically sensitive mind cannot say it is not high or good enough to be worthy of God. 'What we mean by God,' says Goethe, 'is just the best we know.' Do we know or can we even conceive what is better than Christ? Along this line, then, of ethical criticism—which has been in the past the

surest solvent of religious beliefs—Christian faith is in no danger of being superseded. But I shall not develop this, nor make any further general remark on the declension of historical religions; let us come to those precise and practical tests of the question before us of which I spoke.

The line I suggest we should take is this. There are in the present day questions peculiarly characteristic of our times—what, indeed, we call 'questions of the day.' They have arisen in history long after Christianity arose. I think it will be recognised that it is a precise and practical test of whether the gospel is a message only for its own epoch, now long passed, or whether it has continuous and ever new truth in it for every age, if we inquire how far it has got it in it to touch and even to be indispensable in the solution of problems such as these—problems characteristic of the modern world and problems which were not even in the horizon of the mind of the generation to which Christianity first came. There are two such 'questions of the day' which sup-

ply—as again will, I think, be recognised—adequate and appropriate tests of these. One is what is called the social problem; the other what is called the woman's movement. The names are somewhat vague, but are sufficient. The bearing of these two matters on the issue before us I propose briefly to consider.

In the first place, a reflection suggests itself about the existence or rather the rise of problems such as these. They have more immediately emerged in our time from education—from, in the one case, popular education, and, in the other, the higher education of women. But their ultimate source is far further back than that. It is, as a matter of fact, within the area of Christianity, and within this area only, that any such questions have originated. They have not arisen within other religions, even within a religion so humane as Buddhism; they have not been originated by secular philosophies, even a philosophy so enlightened as that of Aristotle. And it is not difficult to perceive how this is so. Both of these questions are at bottom questions of personality. The

social question, in its demands for higher wages and better conditions and restricted hours of labour, is not merely an attempt—whether just or otherwise—on the part of the 'have-nots' to dispossess the 'haves;' deeper than that, it is the effort of the suppressed personality of masses of the people who are awaking to feel they have the right to the life not of machines but of beings with a soul to be called their own. The woman's question is not merely an agitation—justifiable or otherwise—for a political franchise; deeper than that, it is essentially a demand that women shall not any more be regarded as a subordinate means towards the life of the other sex, but shall be recognised as, in the full sense of the word, human persons possessing, as truly as man does, that personality which is not a means but an end. I think I am not wrong in saying that here is the root-thought common to both these movements. Now there can be no question whence this thought of the respect due to the personality of the worker or of woman took its birth—in, at least, any practical and effective sense. It was

in this way the gospel spoke to the worker and to woman. Most truly has Guizot said: *'Ce n'est pas Montesquieu, c'est Jésus-Christ qui a rendu au genre humain ses titres.'*[1] To this, indeed, must be added the humiliating admission that this thought of the Christian gospel about the personality of the worker or of woman has not been carried out in the practice of the so-called Christian state, nor has it always been even in the Church that its most faithful advocates have been found. This 'reproach of the gospel'[2]—as Mr. Peile has entitled his recent Bampton Lecture—is undeniable. It has its effect not only in alienating masses at home from Christianity because of social wrongs done or tolerated under its name, but also in counteracting the appeal of Jesus Christ to heathen peoples, who, seeing the slums and the streets of any city in modern Christendom, are repelled rather than attracted to a religion of which these are the fruits. But all this—which arises out of the fact that Jesus

[1] *L'Eglise*, p. 153.

[2] The Bampton Lecture for 1907, by the Rev. James W. F. Peile, M.A.

Christ has linked His gospel and even His reputation with a human stewardship which has proved so unfaithful as to be in danger of being suffered to be steward no longer—does not alter the historical circumstances in which such questions as those that have been named have taken their rise. We semi-Christian nations have not done right by the worker or by woman; but we know there is the right to be done. And where did we first learn that? There is, I repeat, no question as to the answer. We first learned it, or rather heard it—for learned it have we hardly yet—not from any socialists or feminists, but from Him who died for the slave as for the free, and who spoke to the soul of a woman on the same level as to the soul of a man.

But I turn to the questions themselves, and first to the social problem. The phrase is ineffably vague, yet its meaning is very real to every awakened mind and conscience. The seemingly hopeless disorder and distress and degradation of the conditions of life of masses of men and women and children in this twenti-

eth Christian century begets a profound pessimism within the heart of any one who even looks over the edge of the social abyss; but it is to-day what I will call an ethical pessmism. It is not the feeling which we perceive at the close of the Middle Ages, when men found the world so hopelessly bad that they could do nothing but wait for the coming judge:—

'Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt; vigilemus!
Ecce minaciter imminet Arbiter, Ille Supremus!' [1]

The pessimism of to-day in face of social facts is deep; but why is it deep? It is deep because it has, with new resolution, set itself not to 'watch' but to work. Therefore it realises the difficulty and desperateness of the problem as the world never did when it simply left it alone or even simply left it to the judgment of God. This is a new kind of pessimism, and there is something at least like a hope at the heart of

[1] Bernard of Clugny's *De Contemptu Mundi*. Translated by Neale in the well-known lines:—

'The world is very evil,
The times are waxing late;
Be sober and keep vigil,
The Judge is at the gate.'

it. To say it proves the dawn *must* follow is to say too much; but, certainly, this is the kind of darkness which must precede the dawn.

Not, however, to dwell on this, I pass to our particular point, which is how far the Christian gospel is vitally related to this problem and essential in the solution of it. Now, on the surface, social reform is a question of political administration which shall effect a just reorganisation of the material conditions of life. As such it may appear to be a purely civil and secular concern, with which the gospel, even though touching all that is human, can hardly be said to be essentially connected. But in the whole trend of modern thinking on the subject, it is becoming more and more clear that the solution of the social problem is not merely a matter of political administration nor of merely the adjustment of the outward conditions of life. Let us look at this and whither it leads.

That the problem is to-day being worked out on administrative and legislative lines is itself a development from the days of the classic socialism of Karl Marx, who predicted an even

keener class war between capital and labour till at last, when the intermediate class had been crushed out of existence, there would be a decisive conflict by which, he believed, the forces of labour would wrest the supremacy from the enemy and establish a new order. That this has not actually come true, and (in this country, at least) is not likely to come true, is only because this conflict—which, Marx seemed to forget, is not between two abstract forces which go blindly to their fate, but among men who can foresee and to some extent divert disasters—has been evaded by the mediation of various kinds of legislative and administrative concessions, which have at least provisionally and at the acutest points taken the edge off the antagonism. In this way has a constitutional socialism largely taken the place of a revolutionary one.[1] Instead of smashing the machine, social reformers now capture it. They got into Parliament, as the Labour Party do, to promote their ends; or they set them-

[1] I say 'largely,' not entirely, for the revolutionary principle still lives, and was recently revived in what is known as syndicalism.

selves, as so notably Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb have done, to educate expert opinion on the subject. This administrative and legislative social reform is going on more and more, and in this sense we are, as a statesman of the last generation[1] said, 'all socialists to-day.' And so we should be and must be. The single fact that there are millions of our people—to speak only of England—who are compelled to live in conditions which give the life neither of body nor soul hardly a chance, and 'who, if they spent every farthing they possessed on the bare necessities of life, would still be underfed and inadequately clothed,'[2] makes a demand for economic adjustment which must be met by legislative and administrative reform.

But the interesting feature of much of the best modern thinking on the question of how it is to be done is this. It is those most advanced in their convictions about social reform in the political sense who see most clearly that

[1] Sir William Harcourt, I think it was.

[2] 'The Industrial Unrest,' by B. Seebohm Rowntree, in *The Contemporary Review,* October 1911.

the solution of this most complicated problem is going to involve far more than a mere political programme. The truth is the world cannot be saved by either its parliamentary legislators or its social experts. It must be saved by itself. This is the thought which is becoming more and more clear. It means that the deepest need towards the attainment of a new earth is what the distinguished social educationalists whom I named a moment ago—and who make up, if I may say so, perhaps the most intelligent intellectual partnership at present working in England—called recently 'a change of heart.'[1] There must be this alike in those by whom the problem is to be solved and those for whom, more immediately, it is to be solved. With the former, there must be the development of a new idea and principle—a moral and social motive in place of a material and selfish one; with the latter, there must be—along with better houses, higher wages, more time free from labour—also character and a

[1] 'What is Socialism? A Change of Heart,' by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, in *The New Statesman,* 19th April 1913.

new ideal of life. Without this 'change of heart'—which obviously is not legislative but personal—neither will men be constrained to do what is right to the down-trodden sections of society, nor, if it were done, would it effect a permanent good. Thus is it that social regeneration is a moral and personal even more than—or, at the lowest, as well as—a political problem. It will be accomplished, says Mr. Philip Snowden, not by a revolution, but by a co-operation of 'men and women of all classes whose moral senses have been developed.'[1] Till something of this kind permeates heart and mind and conscience, the promised land is still afar off. No one sees this more clearly than Mr. H. G. Wells, who, whatever one may think of his influence or of his qualifications to be a guide of the moral life either of individuals or of society, is certainly a man who can think. He too speaks of 'the great Change;' and this is 'no mere change in conditions and institutions' but 'a change of heart and mind.'[2] And

[1] In *The Christian Commonwealth*, 20th September 1911.
[2] *In the Comet's Tail*, p. 303.

he twits the programmists who have schemes for socialistic regeneration by asking if their 'aunts' or the 'grocer' or the 'family solicitor' can be counted upon for support.[1] That is to say, he sees the problem is not in programmes but in persons—is, in a word, in ourselves. This, of course, does not mean that it has ceased to be political—a matter of laws and administrative reforms, of houses and wages and material improvement generally. But it has ceased to be only that. It is personal as well as political, moral as well as material, an affair of the 'changed heart' as well as the amended statute.

Now—and to come at length to our point, which needs but a word more to be clear—what is all this but just a coming back to the word of Christ, who said: 'The kingdom of God is within you'? What, then, is going to put it within us—is going to give men this changed heart, this moral sense, this new self? I find the thinkers I have named throw little or no light on this. The authors of the article to

[1] *New Worlds for Old*, p. 225.

which I referred on 'The Changed Heart' suggest merely the 'ever-widening adoption of the socialistic motive' through the preaching of the new Political Economy. Mr. Wells has really nothing to offer; sometimes he thinks the 'good will' is to come a long time hence, or (in the romance named a moment ago) lets his fancy picture the 'great Change' accomplished magically by the swish of a comet's tail, which shall introduce a life where war and falseness and selfishness and ugliness shall be no more and there will be everywhere 'a new world.' Mr. Bernard Shaw on one occasion, speaking with unwonted seriousness, told the Labourists that 'it is only by religion in the real sense of the word that you can get at people'—something, that is, which 'gets a man out of his own miserable fears and causes him to identify himself with the Life-force of the Universe so that he feels his complete union with the human race;' but the gospel of this religion is apparently 'to popularize the ideal of equality' —by which Mr. Shaw says he means to 'distribute money equally'—which 'does respond,'

he somewhat strangely thinks, 'to a genuine want in human nature' and 'is next to all our hearts.'[1] It does not become the believer in Christianity to mock at the inadequacy of appeals such as these to change the human heart; these are the best appeals men can make since, as it seems to them as they look at the Christian world and the Church, the appeal of the gospel is practically inoperative. Socialists would not have turned to comets if Christians had been true to Christ. But it is permissible to say that any one, convinced about the necessity of this inward and personal renewal as a factor in social reform, has only to throw off his prejudice—unorthodox persons can be prejudiced quite as much as orthodox—in order to be led, even if it be past centuries of the selfishness and sinfulness of so-called Christians, straight to Jesus Christ. I shall not here reopen an argument about Christ: I shall only say to look at Him and learn of Him, and above all live with Him, mean a new heart and

[1] Reported in *The Labour Leader*, 28th April 1911. This is a worthier Shaw than that referred to in Chapter VI.

a new motive and a new self as nothing else in the world does. And this means that the Christian gospel—while it does not offer the solution of the social problem, which will still demand all the energies of political reason—is yet indispensable to the solution of it; and that Jesus Christ, from whom (as I said on an earlier page) the whole question really took its origin, is still the essential living factor in it.

The bearing of this on the often debated question of the duty of the Church towards the social problem is immediate; but it is not within the purpose of our present discussions to exhort upon that, and, moreover, I must now pass on.

I pass to the second specific question which was named—the woman's movement. If I touch on this more briefly and only at one point, it is from considerations of space, and certainly not from any want of the due sense of the importance of the issues involved; on the contrary, I believe that here is something at once deeper in its principles and more far-reaching in its consequences than any other movement (except the gospel itself) before the civilised

world. Of course, when I say this I am not thinking of the agitation for the suffrage; that is an arguable implicate of the wider idea, upon which the political reason will adjudicate according to whether it is or is not convinced that it will be for the welfare of the state. These pages are certainly not the place for the writer to inflict his views on this question upon the reader. By the woman's movement I mean something far greater than any mere franchise. I meant the idea—which indubitably is permeating the mental, moral, and social atmosphere of the times in which we are living—of the new sense of equality between men and women. The term 'sex-equality' is capable of misuse, but I mean it here in its true sense. It does not, of course, mean that there are not natural differences between men and women which will always be, and which, moreover, will always involve differences in political and also in personal relations. And it does not mean anything so foolish as that men and women are equal in everything; there are some things men will always do better than women, just as there are

others women will always do better than men. Nor does it mean anything so abhorrent as a sex-rivalry or sex-war. It means, on the contrary, something common to both—the humanity common to both; and therefore that a woman, *equally* with a man, has the full rights and also responsibilities of that humanity. Thus, woman's life at its best is complementary to man's just as man's at its best is complementary to woman's; but also, in her case as in his, life is more than this, and she has the right to be herself as he has to be himself. Again, the contribution which women can make to the common work and welfare of the world will be most successful when it is in co-operation with that of man, just as man's will be when it is in co-operation with that of women (and has often failed from lack of this); but she, as well as he, has a responsibility which is direct and is not limited by what may be appended to the other's. This I take to be the root-idea of the woman's movement. It is with us to-day, and will be with us more and more, profoundly influencing the whole life of civilisation. I have

already pointed out the connection between the gospel and the origin of any such ideas. We have now to ask if, in any vital sense, the gospel is indispensable in the application of them in our own times.

As I have said, I am going to touch on only one point. It by no means exhausts the subject, but it is what we want—a crucial test-case; moreover, what is essential to be said upon it can be said in not many sentences. There is nothing which this new relation between men and women, looking at each other with eyes level, will more surely affect, and nothing by which its results will more severely be tested, than the standard of morality between the sexes. Just because it is essentially the claim of personality, it cannot but express itself in this connection; and just because it is a claim for equality in personality, it cannot and will not accept the dual standard—one for man and another for woman—at present generally recognised. Whatever else it may or may not do, the idea of sex-equality (in the sense explained a moment ago) will—not, of course,

suddenly or immediately, but surely and gradually — make these two codes approximate. Obviously this may result in either of two directions. It may mean that women will more and more claim the licence of the laxer standard now widely tolerated in men; or it may mean that the higher standard, now demanded of women, will more and more be also and equally demanded of men. The former alternative I do not discuss because it is something to be, wherever it appears, not discussed but simply fought; the one remark I make in passing from it is that, in any section of society which descends to it, it is women who will have to pay the price. But assuming the other alternative, I wish to press the question of how this is to be maintained otherwise than with the Christian ideal and the Christian law. I cannot see that any merely naturalistic and utilitarian principle of ethic will maintain it—not to say, with any power enforce it. For naturalism, which is with Christianity as regards such things as justice or truth, or even, to some extent, benevolence, is not clearly with it as

regards the equal obligation of purity upon man as upon woman. From the point of view solely of natural consequences to the individual, the family, and the state, this obligation may be broken by a man with a degree of impunity which, for obvious reasons, does not apply to a woman. It is just this fact which the natural man has fastened on to his own mean advantage, and because of it, defenders (whom I shall not here quote) of that dual ethical code to which reference has been made can, from the purely utilitarian standpoint, make a case, as a case can be made from the wrong point of view for any wrong thing. Therefore, I ask again, how, apart from Christianity, with its commanding principle on this matter and its constraining power, are you going to maintain the higher equal law of purity? There are, of course, very many non-Christians who themselves are true to it, but this is individual practice. I do not find that our modern non-Christian authors, especially in fiction—and I am thinking not of the baser kind—lay it down as a law. Only Jesus Christ is the law of this.

By this I mean no merely ecclesiastical or theological canon or dogma. I mean that when Jesus Christ is brought into any human life—whether the life of a man or of a woman makes not the least difference—then only one principle is here possible. That is what I mean when I say that Christ is a law in this matter, and He is the only law in it. I shall not pursue this subject further, though I need make no apology for having touched on it, for it is vital both in the woman's movement and for the social future generally. But I think enough has been said or indicated to make clear the point for our present purpose, which is that in this vital issue, which must develop in one direction or the other out of the idea of the equal personality of the sexes, the Christian law and ideal, far from being obsolete and useless, are, on the contrary, indispensable if the inevitable future approximation of these two standards of morality is to mean not a levelling down but a levelling up, and is to be the vindication and the victory not of the lower but of the higher law of life.

This, then, is the conclusion which I think we may reach regarding the permanence of the value of the Christian message for our day as tested by the two specific problems which have been briefly discussed. The conclusion is not that the Christian gospel is of itself the solution of these problems, which in many respects remain problems to be worked out by what I have called the political reason, and God has not given us the gospel to save us the trouble of using our reason. But it is that the gospel is an indispensable element in their solution. To put it even more simply, these problems need Jesus Christ. These 'questions of the day' —of this late twentieth century—cannot be truly answered apart from Him.

Now if this be true, it is but the exemplification in two typical instances of a greater general truth with which I shall now draw this chapter and, with it, the book towards an end.

If these questions need Christ, so does the world. This is to be said of the present age with very special cogency. The world to-day is changing in a way which is making many

thoughtful men—and among them even those who have no strong personal need of Jesus Christ—realise that momentous issues for mankind are involved in the place which Christianity may hold in the world of to-morrow. I have space to mention but one aspect of this. The world is becoming unified. It is not merely that its territory is practically all discovered and delimited, but—what is much more important—it is being knit into an interrelated whole through, chiefly, the dual factors of education and commerce. Nowhere is the effect of this more profound than in the far Orient, where great nations are passing with extraordinary rapidity through a tremendous transformation. It is hardly too much to say that all the potent forces which in our European history operated singly and with long intervals between them under such names as the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Revolution, the Social Movement, the Educational Enlightenment, and others, are to-day operating all at once in India and China and Japan. Amid the vast and varied consequences of this, the effect on

religion is inevitable and will be profound. Polytheism and ancestor-worship have no future in this new era. The prospect therefore is imminent of the opening of the sluice-gates for the flooding of the world with great materialistic civilisations which have discarded the restraints and reverences of their old faiths, and have found no other instead. The only alternative presented to these nations is the name of Jesus Christ. It is thus that not only particular questions need Christ: it is the world which needs Him. In the most unexpected quarters indications appear of how men feel this to-day about the future of the world, even when (as I have said) they may not feel it in their own personal life; the last indication of it is the recent call of the new Republic of China for the prayers of its Christian people.[1] From all

[1] This remarkable action is not to be represented as meaning more than it does mean. But it means at least a sense that Christianity is an element in the national life which may have something vital or valuable for the nation at its period of crisis. Not dissimilarly, exactly sixteen hundred years ago, Constantine turned the eyes of the pagan Roman empire to Christianity, not so much out of his own personal faith as with the feeling that this religion was the coming thing, and the hope of the future lay in it.

this, and from the facts which give rise to it —into which I cannot now further enter—I draw but two thoughts, one about the world and one about the Church, and so close.

About the world, it suggests the thought that the real hope of progress is bound up with Jesus Christ. Progress is an idea which the modern mind—exhilarated, as I have already in this chapter suggested, by the strong wine of evolution—is apt to assume too easily, as if it were an axiom of life and history which is the pledge of a glorious future. This is not a very far-seeing or accurate view. In the first place, evolution as a secular process has its terrible as well as its inspiring aspect. The disillusioning pen of Anatole France reminds us that 'the human race is not capable of an indeterminate progress,' and that some day 'when the sun goes out—a catastrophe that is bound to be'—'the globe will go rolling on, bearing with it through the silent fields of space the ashes of humanity.'[1] But if this despairing future seems too distant to impress the mind, let us test the idea

[1] *Le Jardin d'Epicure,* E. T., by Alfred Allinson, pp. 26-7.

of human progress within the narrower area of history. Undoubtedly there has been in human history an immense advance in some things. Of these I will name, as perhaps the chief, these two—knowledge and comfort. The progress of knowledge is such that a schoolboy to-day knows things which were hid from Aristotle: the progress in comfort is hardly less, and the necessities of the people of the twentieth century are the unheard-of luxuries of the most wealthy of past ages. In these respects, this day—of books and schools, of telephones and motor-cars—is incomparably in advance of days gone by. But neither comfort nor even mere knowledge is the deepest thing in life. Let us test the idea of progress by two deeper things. The two most real tests of life are, I imagine, happiness and character. If, then, we look at the evolution of human history—apart, so far as this is possible, from the law and gospel of Jesus Christ—do we find a real and certain progress in these things? I greatly doubt it. I do not find the non-Christian product of twentieth century civilisation a hap-

pier thing than some old Greek who lived in Athens in the days of Pericles or, in some quieter spot of Hellas, tended his herds and saw the sunlight on the violet sea. As regards character, a man who to-day casts off the restraints of the higher morality is easily, and indeed is essentially, a worse man than any example of lust or cruelty in the days of pagan Rome, and certainly merits a deeper damnation. In a word I do not find that life and history, apart from Jesus Christ, assure any great happiness or any high ethical elevation for mankind. M. France—in the work from which I quoted a moment ago—summons, as the two truest judges on human life, Irony and Pity. And indeed it is true: these are the two thoughts which the human spectacle leaves in the observant mind. But this is the human spectacle as viewed by one who has never recognised its Divine Hero. When with human life and human history is linked Jesus Christ and something of what we have found Jesus Christ to be and to mean for man and for the world, then and then only does the pity deepen into sacrificing and saving love, and the irony is

transfigured into faith and hope. It is He that is the star of human destiny; and better than any evolutionary law—in part terrible and in part dubious—and its pledge of progress is He who is the Light of the world which shall never set.

The other thought suggested by what has been said applies more particularly to the Church. The Church of to-day often bewails the spiritual flatness of the age, and its indifference to religion. I am not disposed to accept all such strictures on the irreligion of this age without qualifications, partly because any one who reads religious history and biography knows how such things are said of many ages, and partly because I would judge the religion of an age, as I would that of a man, by the state of the conscience, and I think the conscience of the present time is indisputably awake as that of many an age—even more orthodox—in the past was not. Still, that there is a flatness in the religious life of the Church to-day is only too evident. Now, in past times, deliverance from such times of flatness has come to the Church through great re-

vivals of personal religion, when the souls of men were stirred to cry out 'What must I do to be saved?' For this revival many seek the signs; many would even manufacture its appearing. But the wind bloweth where it listeth, and the breath of this spiritual revival does not come. May the reason be this? We ask God to speak to the age. Was there ever an age in history when more distinctly God was speaking? He is speaking to the Church to-day—so that, as I have indicated, even the world can hear it—in the great problems of the social cry for justice and in the great need of the heathen world for Christ. That is God's voice as really and as surely as any conviction of guilt in the soul of an awakened sinner. May it not be that only as the Church hears these calls of God will His Spirit again descend upon her with power and blessing? The revival awaiting the Church may be one in which men shall turn again to Christ, saying not only—though this will ever be with the other—that He and He only is the Saviour of their souls, but that He and He only is the Saviour of the world.

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